Preludes and Symphonies

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PRELUDES AND SYMPHONIES

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PRELUDES AND SYMPHONIES

BY

OLIVER GREY,

AUTHOR OF "RHYMES AND RHAPSODIES," &c.

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To Averil.

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L'amour es la vido,
La vido es l'amour ;
L'amour nous convido
A cuie li flour.

THEODORE AUBANEL.

HERE'S a song for the merry,
A dirge for the sad,
Wild blossoms of cherry
That make the heart glad.

For hours of dreaming
When May-time is here,
Marsh-marigolds gleaming,
Your fancy to cheer:

For lost love a strewing
Of roses and yew,
And for poor heart's undoing
A garland of rue:

For friendship the flowers
Of rosemary sweet:
For Love's happy hours
White violets meet:

For Winter's cold chiding
Black ivy to crown
The wine-cup's abiding,
And Beauty's renown:

But unless of your favour,
My Lady, they gain,
Their scent 's without savour,
The song is in vain.

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SONGS FOR THE SEASONS.

VER VICTRIX.

YOU ask me why I sing
Of Spring,
And why, when dark the days,
My lays
Are all of April flowers.
Nay, ask the Lover, who
Doth woo
With service true his Fair,
What rare
Sweet influence rules his hours;

Or ask the Mother mild,
Whose child
Laughs in her happy arms,
What charms
Bind her with magic powers;
Or ask the silver Moon
What boon
Draws her towards the sea,
That she
Deserts her lofty towers,

And stoops to kiss the waves,
And craves
Their dim communion;
Ask on
What ceaseless quest the Rill
Murmurs beneath the leaves,
And weaves
Light rhapsodies of song
Among
The green folds of the hill.

Mother, and Regent white
Of Night;
Lover and Stream, as I,
Reply:
"Love, with his master-skill,
Moulds us, and with his spells
Compels
Those whom he holds in thrall
Their all
To render to his will."

MOODS.

I.

WEARY was yesterday!
The wind of a sullen sky
Crept shivering by,
Sombre, wistful, and gray;
And the dreary, pitiless rain
At the window pane
Struggled and tossed,
Till the world was lost
In a blind mist of tears.
Love, overwhelmed by fears,
Turned from his peerless quest;
All that was fairest, best,
Lapped in the dim despair,
Shadowéd everywhere:
While through the land went the moan
of the wind,
Like the threnody
Of hearts that cry
For a joy they never may find.

II.

O, but to-day is sweet!
The clouds in the high blue sky
Shimmer and fly
Like wingéd vessels fleet;
And, from the box-tree hedge
At the garden's edge,
Bursts on my sense
Earth's frankincense:
While in the cherry croft,
Swung in the bloom aloft,
He of the clarion throat,
The thrush, with his bold strong note,
Apostle of Hope, new-born,
Cries, in the sunny morn:
Love 's on the road, with his retinue,
April and Youth
And the maiden Truth.
Will ye not join them too?"

FANCY FREE.

SOUND me no sad-stringed elegy,
But a lyric light, and gay
As the linnet's call in the elm tree tall,
To greet the first spring day.

The mourning clouds give place to mirth.
Love, cast your weeds away;
For the West Wind throws her bridal snows
Over the virgin may.

Give me a kingdom of wide green earth,
Spangled with morning dew,
And a fancy free as the honey bee
In the depth of the speedwell blue.

Or know you a better philosophy
Than this our life to cheer—
A heart that is young, and a song well sung
In the sweet of the budding year?

WHERE CATKINS WAVE.

BRIGHT oriflamme of Spring!
Even as I took my way
Hard by the coppice gray,
And heard the branches ring
With joyful song;
Lo! underneath the trees,
Where the lush hazels grew,
Gaily the catkins flew
Banners upon the breeze—
A sprightly throng.

As though the minstrels, who
First to the north take flight
When the pale aconite
Breaks into gold anew,
And daisies peer,
Far off had met the maid
Our Lady debonair,
And from her flaxen hair
Pilfered a gleaming braid,
Sad hearts to cheer.

FIRST TIDINGS.

AFTER so many days of gloom,
After so many tears,
See, where the great cloud galleons loom
Across the windy spheres;
Argosies out of the teeming west,
Sailing afar on a golden quest;

Bearing to leaguered lands and lean,
Prisoned in Winter's grip,
The promise of plenty, and, bright between
The length of each stately ship,
As bowed to the wild March wind they fly,
A glittering sea is the azure sky.

This is the time of tidings fair,
The day of the homeward borne,
When the lark, high poised in the liquid air,
Shrill sentinel of the morn,
Sounds aloft from his aery towers
The coming of Spring and the rosy Hours.

WAITING.

PURE and sweet is the earth, and fair
As a bride in her first adorning,
With her warm brown breast to the heaven bare,
And the breath of the amorous West in her hair,
Fresh with the kiss of the morning.

O, the world is beautiful, Dear, in March,
When the last snow melts in the hollows,
When a crimson mist o'erspreads the larch,
And the dust, whirled high to heaven's arch,
The flickering sunlight follows ;

When the streamlet mocks the lean-stemmed sedge,
And lifts its voice in laughter ;
When emeralds flash in the bramble hedge,
And the willows are rich with the downy pledge
And promise of gold hereafter.

The lapwings cry the meadows through,
Among the daisies roaming ;
The black rooks circle in the blue :
But I am thinking, thinking of you
With the sunny springtide homing.

THE MERRY MAY-TIME.

I'LL sing you a song of bells and joy,
The song of a girl, and the song of a boy,
A youth afraid, and a maiden coy,
Who met in the merry ring-time.

I'll sing you a song of meads aglow,
Where Mary-buds gold and cowslips blow,
In the land by the strand that all true lovers know,
The land of the merry spring-time.

I'll sing you the song the west winds bring,
The song of the hyacinth bells a-swing,
The song of delight the nightingales sing,
When moon 's at full in the hay-time.

I'll sing you the song of care forgot,
The song of the blue forget-me-not,
The song of the shaft the Bow-boy shot
At a heart in the merry May-time.

PRIMA VERA.

AN azure sea, the castle moat
With myosotis glows;
The bluebell dons his dainty coat,
And gay the speedwell blows;
But what are all their pretty dyes
Beside the blue of Cynthia's eyes?

The jessamine whose essence drifts
Warm from the wind's embrace;
The summer rose that blushing lifts
Toward the sun her face;
How is their sweetness naught beside
Her scented lips' imperious pride.

I heard the lark rejoicing strew
The sky with pearls of song,
The nightingale his love review
In raptures deep and long
But when she raised her voice as I,
They hushed their shamefaced minstrelsy.

I saw the sun, when morning broke,
Sweep o'er the dewy grass,
And scarce the daffodils awoke
To see the pageant pass;
But when she came they danced and sang,
And thousand elfin trumpets rang.

I watched the moon descend her throne
Beneath the ocean's brim;
The pale stars, through the midnight blown,
Burnt desolate and dim;
So in my heart her sovereign light
Alone can make the darkness bright.

GRATA VICE VERIS.

THERE comes a day, hard on the laggard March,
When skies are blue, and fleecy clouds a-flying,
When with the wind the highways crack and parch,
And loud the cuckoo's mate is crying.

The dustman East has swept the marshes clean,
The shredded ensigns from the beeches torn ;
And breaking buds, like emeralds, shine between
The pearls that deck the virgin thorn.

Among the green pavilions of the meads
The larks are mustering—a minstrel crew ;
And deep the hive within the palm bloom speeds
The labour of the year anew.

All day along the furrow gleams the share,
And parent rooks attend the patient plough,
Whose voices, through the fresh earth-scented air
Answer the nestlings in the bough.

And lo ! where amber-tressèd daffodils
Dance to the sun, and woo his fitful gleams,
Love's magic influence the morning thrills,
And o'er the world triumphant streams.

IN OLD PROVENCE.

IN old Provence, in old Provence,
The voice of Spring is crying,
And, with the joy of life intense,
The swallows blithe are flying
Among the silvered olive trees,
Across the rose-flushed mountain skrees;
Winter is dying, dying.

In old Provence, in old Provence,
Anemones are fading,
And, hung in murmurous suspense,
The golden bees are lading
Rich bags of treasure from the thyme,
And amaryllis bells that chime
To south winds' serenading.

In old Provence, in old Provence,
The earth, herself renewing,
Wakes from her slumber deep, and dense
The paths with April's strewing
Of rosemary, and cistus gay,
Invite the weary heart to stay,
And sing to Grief's undoing.

In old Provence, in old Provence,
Beneath the almond showers,
Spring moves with fairy steps, a sense
Of beauty through the flowers,
And with her magic charms away
Dark memories of yesterday,
And Winter's dreary hours.

GAUDETE.

SEE how the daffodils
Shake out their golden frills!
March winds the meadow sweep:
Nothing in Nature dies.
Autumn sings lullabies;
Sadly the snowflakes fall;

But at the appointed hour
Spring wakes the sleeping flower,
Lambs in the folding leap:
Naught of decay is here,
So, with the new-born year,
Make we glad festival.

THE MARCH WIND.

BOISTEROUS wind of March,
Wake the primroses
Where the slim hazels arch
O'er slumbering closes:

Strenuous yeoman strong,
Through the meads shouting;
Fountains of dust along
Silver roads spouting;

Brother of hail and sleet,
Hard on thy courses,
Over the ocean, fleet
As the white horses,

Racing and borne away,
Who knoweth whither?
Scattering the salt sea-spray
Hither and thither;

Joining the daffodils'
Jubilant dances;
Scouring the far-seen hills'
Clean-swept expanses;

Cheering with lusty voice
Farmstead and byre,
Where the young lambs rejoice,
And gorse is afire;

Onward with gusty wings
Nothing can tire!
Fill the wide earth with Spring's
Peerless desire!

LOVE'S RETURN.

I WANDERED in the sunny morn:
With sounding horn,
March through the clanging branches rushed,
And swayed and crushed
The leafless woods.
All swept and clean,
The palace green
Of God's good earth
Echoed the mirth
Of Spring's divine awaking.
Bright celandines like topaz shone,
And, strung upon
The hawthorn bough, as rubies red,
The young buds shed
Their winter hoods;
And with the balm
Of dusted palm
The air was sweet—
An incense meet
For happy bridal making.

The wild birds raised a tuneful strain
To greet again
The travellers o'er far-off seas ;
The wandering bees,
With music boon,
Made undertone ;
And, fitful blown
From cote and fold,
The sheep-bells told
How Love and Spring were mating.
And to the universal song,
Vibrant and strong,
My heart made answer, for I knew,
Dear Love, that you
Were coming soon,
Since, where our last
Sweet meeting past,
For you, behold,
In ranks of gold,
The daffodils were waiting.

THE CALL OF SPRING.

DAFFODILS are fading fast,
Mourned with many a dewy tear:
Come, ere April-tide be past!

When their cowls the chestnuts cast,
Nightingales sing trental clear:
Daffodils are fading fast!

But from Winter's crumbling mast
Orchids red their pennons rear:
Come, ere April-tide be past!

Of the flowers wilt thou be last,
Who among them hast no peer?
Daffodils are fading fast!

In his greenwood palace vast,
Waiteth Love his mistress dear:
Come, ere April-tide be past!

Time is an iconoclast;
Soon will meads be brown and sere;
Daffodils are fading fast:
Come, ere April-tide be past!

FOR REMEMBRANCE.

IN the spring, in the spring,
When the bonny jonquil glows,
When all the woodlands sing,
And the bursting chestnut throws
To the wind its winter cerements,
And the bridal hawthorns ring
With the blackbird's fond endearments;
When the daffadillies swing
Golden bells with a chime
For April's merry greeting,
For the resurrection time,
And lovers' happy meeting:

In the spring, in the spring,
Let the birds that northward go
This tender message bring:
"When red thy roses blow,
O veering heart and fickle,
Wilt thou forget the flowers
Love garnered with his sickle
In sunny southern bowers?"

O SHEPHERD, STAY.

O SHEPHERD, stay!
The apple bloom
Will fade away;
The hours of gloom
Silence the nightingale;
And from the May,
Whose bridal veil
Shines fair and gay,
The lustre pale.
O Shepherd, stay!

O Shepherd, stay!
While it be spring,
And blithely play
Your pipes, and sing
Beneath the willow shade.
Short is the day
Of beauty's prime,
Brief the delay
Of winter time.
O Shepherd, stay!

DIGNE EN PROVENCE.

LO! the fresh willow buds,
Amber and chrysoprase,
Gleam through the sunny haze;
And where the full stream floods
All the green meadows through,
Kingcups of metal fine,
Brimmed with the morning dew,
Flash in the light divine;
And, with their essence rare,
Thyme bloom and rosemary
Cense the bright April air:
While twittering swallows hold
Shrill parley with the bold
Intruding tenantry
Of winter-folk that cry
Clamorous from the nest:
And hark! the drowsy song,
Where saffron-belted bees,
Borne on their honied quest,
In the white branches throng.

O Love, is it so long
That, through such pleasaunces,
With careless happy feet

Passed we, until the call
Of the great world outside
Was but the distant beat
Of far-off waves, that glide
To slumber-shores, and fall
In stricken melody
Over the lone sea-beach?

Is it so long since I
Watched the pale moon unveil,
And arms of ivory reach
Down to the silent vale,
If haply still, upon
Strewings of wind-flowers set,
Love-lorn Endymion
Were sleeping yet?

Night wafts her balmy sighs
As, passing slowly now
From wooded brow to brow,
Vainly her search she plies:
And I, alas! as she,
Drawn by fond memories,
Visit each shadowy spot,
Seeking, but finding not,
Wistful, with weary eyes,
As one who turns to greet

After long years' suspense
Some well-remembered place,
Where, in the days of grace
And long-lost innocence,
Life was so sweet.

Blushes the landscape fair,
Where the peach orchards glow,
And, all in bridal snow,
Lace-frilled, and debonair,
With myriad pearly showers,
Once more the almond flowers.

O, can it be that Love
And the dear time of Youth
Are but a mock of Truth?
That, while the stars above
Ever their lamps renew,
And, 'neath the April blue,
Once more the wood and lawn
Burgeon with beauty bright,
Love re-awakens not:
A flower by Spring forgot,
Looked for in vain, in vain;
A fire that with the dawn
Fades and dissolves; a light
Never to shine again?

TEMPORA MUTANTUR.

LIKE silver lances, stately rank
The reeds beside the stream,
And, starry-golden, from the bank
The Mary-flowers gleam,
And with the tender birchen green
Mix in the sunny water's sheen.

No sound within this fairy spot
Breaks on my reverie,
Save where in yonder tangled plot
The linnet sings for glee,
Or, lapping softly at the edge,
The brook makes music in the sedge.

All here is peace. O, would that I
Such calm contentment knew,
And, strong in her philosophy,
With Nature might pursue
The joy of life; in her made pure,
And in the Truth of Truth secure.

Once, long ago, ere yet the spell
Of base things on me lay,
She to my raptured soul would tell,
Soft with the breath of May,
The secret of that perfect peace,
Beyond all human art to lease.

But rarely now her spirit cheers
The sadness of my hours;
No more my eager fancy hears
Love's voice among the flowers;
Old times are changed, and ne'er again
May I recapture their sweet strain.

THE MAGIC OF MAY.

AS in the early days of spring
The buds their silken sheaths unfold,
So bloom the flowers of memory,
And, from the ashes sere and cold,
The cherished thoughts of days gone by
Sweet comfort to the spirit bring.

Well I remember the happy day
When I drove from Oxford city,
Past stately college, and cloister gray,
In the fresh of the morn with my Pretty.

Fanned by the breeze, the golden curls
Of laburnum fluttered free,
And the lilac petals, a shower of pearls,
Drifted upon the lea.

Over the earth, the light white haze
Danced in diaphanous sheen,
And the water-meadows were all ablaze
With chequers of gold and green.

Loud the larks carolled. Ah! never again
Will that song for us be sung;
Yet, scarce we heard the immortal strain,
For, louder, with silver tongue,

Love's clarion through all nature thrilled;
And, what though time be fleet,
With the magic of May our hearts were filled,
And the world lay at our feet.

We were so steeped in the glamour of youth,
With the sun in the blue above;
For our lips had touched the chalice of truth,
And we drank of the honey of love.

. . . . . .

Bee that deep in the flower
Sweet nectar sips,
That is my darling's dower,
The sweet of her lips.

Glimmer of rose on the peaks
At eventide,
That is the flush of her cheeks
With roses dyed.

Vision of light in the heart
Of the peerless beam,
Tremor of eyes thou art,
That brighter gleam.

Ocean's eternal plaint
Told to the night,
Thou art the echo faint
Of my heart's delight.

Stars on the infinite throne
Of the heaven above,
Ye may measure alone
The depth of my love.

. . . . . .

So we came to the nunnery walls, by the stream,
That kept o'er Rosamund ward,
And dreamed again the forgotten dream
Of the lily maid and her lord.

And her eyes, as they looked in mine, shone bright,
Like stars through the April rain,
When I whispered the story of Love's despite,
And tears shed all in vain.

Then over the hills where Woodstock sleeps
In the peace of ancient ways,
As one who muses content, nor weeps
For the storm of lustier days.

There in the old-world inn awhile
We sang when our feast was done,
And the rose at the window looked in to smile,
And tell us of summer begun.

Then hand in hand, 'neath Blenheim's shade,
Through the gates, as children gay,
We passed to a bower in a fairy glade,
Alone with the spirit of May.

. . . . . .

Beeches aloft,
Sing soft, sing soft:
It is spring,
And I bring
You a flower;
Under your shade
Comes my own dear Maid
To be Queen
Of this green
Wood bower.

Sing, lark, to the sky
Your anthem high;
Sing, thrush,
In the lush
May weather;
For a song shall be sung
For the world that is young,
And the day
That we play
Together.

. . . . . .

Many a rose since then has blown;
We are sundered as stars on high
That meet a moment in heaven alone,
And part for eternity.

But the time between is as naught; the mind
Moves over the days forgot,
Seeking the one-of-all to find,
And the others reckons not.

Long, long ago! But unfaded yet
Is the sun of that day of days,
And green is the garden of memory set
Where you shall be Queen always.

SWEET, IT IS MAY.

SWEET, it is May;
Now, while the zephyrs play
Among the bluebell spires,
Whispering, let us alone
Together go,
And tend the sacred fires
That bright upon
Love's flower-decked altar glow.

Sweet, it is May;
Come out with me and pray
Beneath the hawthorn tree,
That, even as her bridal wreath
Doth but foreshow
The fruit that is to be,
So, one till death,
Our souls may perfect grow.

AT THE DAWN.

NOW is the hour when the blackthorn stark
Frills with the delicate foam
Of snowflakes caught from cloudland dark,
Where, lost in the windy dome
Of highest heaven, the pinions gray
Of Winter flutter, and melt away.

Weave me a scarf of the blackthorn's lace,
And a crown of the star-gold flower;
The diamond dews in crystal case,
Meet for a fairy's dower;
And sprinkle me o'er with the magic chrism
Distilled from the aëry rainbow's prism.

So shall my heart to the Spring be wed,
And, immortal made as she,
On the path of the morning wind be led
To the realms of Poesy;
Soaring aloft, on viewless wings,
From the squalor and storm of earthly things.

AT GODSTOW.

THE air is still,
Lulled by the drowsy song
Of flower-encompassed bees,
Whose echoes fill
The sleeping noon, and throng
The heart with memories,
Till clearer grows
The far-off whispering
Of voices long forgot,
And visions rise of those
Whom, in their happy spring,
Fate pitied not.

See, where the sun
The river brim has kissed,
The kingcups glimmer bright;
Yet, pale and dim
Their radiance, through the mist
Of tears that blind my sight.

How many a May
They with their cloth of gold
Have spread the meads in vain!
For, ne'er this way
My Love that was of old
Shall turn again.

Yet, as the youth
Of Spring immortal glows,
With beauty unimpaired
By winter's ruth,
So, ever fair, she shows,
Who with the flowers shared
Their perfect hour
Of gracious affluence,
And on my being shed
A sweeter dower
Than all the frankincense
Of roses red.

INVITATION TO THE RIVER.

ABOVE the tangled river weed,
Where, beams of light, the fishes speed,
The halcyons dart and gleam;
And many a downy convoy sails
Beneath the weeping-willow trails
Upon the crystal stream.

Come out! the bees invade the lime,
The banks are gay with loosestrife, thyme,
And white convolvulus;
While lilies fair, with golden een,
Peep out their shining leaves between,
To smile, dear Love, on us.

And, where the murmuring waters meet,
Our dainty Lady Meadowsweet
Puts on her wedding veil,
As round her close, an escort proud
Of gallant guards, the poppies crowd,
In suits of fiery mail.

And, lo! the dazzling masquerade
Of bridesmaid butterflies, arrayed
In silks of iris sheen,
That o'er the hayfields' green expanse
A never-ending morris dance
In honour of their Queen.

And what though melts the bridal noon
Into the eventide so soon,
And fade the summer hours,
Yet may we gather, ere the day
In rosy splendour flees away,
Wreaths of immortal flowers—

The flowers divine of memory
That shall not wither with July,
But, ever radiant, shed
Their charm upon us, when the hand
Of winter sears the riverland,
And all its joys are dead.

BESIDE THE RIVER.

THE sun sets in a rosy haze
Beyond the level line of meads;
The breeze upon the water strays,
And whispers to the nodding reeds;
While echoing chimes, far down the stream,
Sound faint as music in a dream.

Upon a willow that inclines
Toward the river, silent now,
My Lilian sits, and golden shines
The tangled hair about her brow:
A very Dryad of the wood,
Embodied in fair maidenhood.

So pensive now who lately went
A joyful spirit through the flowers;
I wonder with what innocent
And happy thoughts the evening dowers
Her fairy fancy, and what stores
Of new delights her mind explores.

To her, perhaps, the waters bring
  A message that I may not hear,
And to her pure imagining
  The secret of the hour is clear;
Since only those whose souls are white
May read in Nature's book aright.

Dream on, dear child, and I will pray
  For you the greatest boon of all:
That age may never steal away
  Youth's perfect faith, whate'er befall,
And that your heart, as years go by,
May grow in sweet simplicity.

UNDER THE GREENWOOD TREE.

UPON a flowery bank I lay
In noontide slumber drowsing:
No sound was there, save linnets gay
Among the green oaks housing.

The air was still, and on my sense,
Across the beanfield streaming,
Sweet Nature did her balm dispense,
And mingled with my dreaming;

Until upon my lips the scent,
Outpoured in magic fashion,
With all the wealth of summer blent,
And June's pervading passion,

Drew softly into shape and form,
Like honey-drops in making,
And then I knew your kisses warm
Had wooed me to awaking.

A SUMMER NIGHT.

STILL is the summer night,
With heavy memories laden,
And lo! in silent flight,
The silver-haired Moon-Maiden
Moves, with her spangled retinue,
Across the deep ethereal blue.

Hidden in distant meads,
Among their scented mazes,
The corn-crake shakes the beads
From phantom ox-eyed daisies,
And, watchman of the dreaming flowers,
Tells out the passing of the hours.

All else in calm immense
Night's drowsy opiates lap,
Till from my inner sense
The circling fetters snap,
And, raised on fancy's wings, I seem
To touch the world's remoter scheme.

Far off life's discords sound
  Like storms of ocean spent,
As, with the Immortals crowned,
  Through all the firmament
My soul the star-girt dome assails,
And highest heaven triumphant scales.

And what though soon must I,
  Like Lucifer, be cast
From such high ecstasy
  Back to the earth at last;
Still shall my spirit feed upon
This glorious revelation.

BY SONNING BRIDGE.

A PEACEFUL Sunday afternoon
In boon September weather;
A garden fair; a basket chair:
I and my Thoughts together.
The dragonflies with rainbow wings
Above the sedges quiver,
Where close the old red arches fold
The golden-bosomed river.
Upon the air a thousand scents
The fruited orchards utter,
And memories, like butterflies,
Across my day-dreams flutter.

On such a day, by yonder bank—
Ah me! how time is flying!—
A hand as light as rose-leaves white
Within my own was lying.
And what cared I for skies of blue,
Or sweet of roses sunny?
For me her eyes were heaven, her sighs
The buds' essential honey.

God made no fairer flower than she
For that green mead's adorning,
Where poets sing love's burgeoning,
And spring's immortal morning.

I see her now, so stately tall,
A lily crowned with glory;
The birds awoke whene'er she spoke,
The winds took up their story;
And Love, the Master-Lord, was all
The burden of their song,
And she, the Queen of peerless mien,
Whose soul could do no wrong.
The vision fades! Alas! how long
Since in that magic weather
We wandered, Dear! How lonely here
I and my Thoughts together!

FAREWELL TO THE ROSES.

IN fleeting showers the dead leaves fall,
The lawns are cloth of gold,
The robins in the laurel call,
The evening wind breathes cold.

But faithful roses scatter yet,
Beneath the southern wall,
The frankincense of fond regret
For days beyond recall—

The roses which adorned the hours
When, crowned with amethyst,
And garlanded with summer flowers,
Love kept with us the tryst ;

And, as beneath the stars they dreamed,
Upon our hearts, like dew,
Distilled such thoughts as sweeter seemed
Than ever lovers knew.

Come, then, into the garden fraught
With memory's dear delight,
Ere, in the sunset's glory caught,
They glimmer into night;

And let us bid farewell to those
Who were companions true,
Lest, as the spring that comes and goes,
They deem us faithless too.

THE FALL OF THE LEAF.

AUTUMN, with a magic tincture,
Red the cherry steeps;
Girdled with a fiery cincture,
Through the land she sweeps,
Onward flying,
Sighing, crying:
"Summer, Lady Summer sleeps."

Dusk and sere upon the mountains,
Lo! the storm-clouds lower;
Like the spray of wind-blown fountains,
Where the poplars cower,
Leaves are streaming,
Teeming, gleaming,
In a never-ending shower.

Once upon the hills we wandered
When the world was young;
Ah! the happy hours we squandered
All the flowers among!
Hearts unthinking
Linking, drinking
Love's elixir as we sung.

Past and finished is the story,
As a sun that 's set,
But the memory of its glory
Blinds my vision yet,
Deeper flushing,
Hushing, crushing
Back the tears of vain regret.

IN THE OLD GARDEN.

AS down the paths with leaves bestrewed
I wander sick at heart,
The west wind shares my solitude,
And sighs with me apart;
While every tree and withered stem
Wails back a mournful requiem.

Borne on the breeze, now soft, now loud,
I hear the turret-chime,
And memories through the twilight crowd
Of that fair summer time
When roses round the dial clung,
And you, and I, and Love were young.

Then scarce we marked the moments pass
From morn to vesper bell,
Scarce marked the ruth upon the grass
Where June's red petals fell;
For all the world besides was naught
While Love his master-lesson taught.

Wake, bells, again! that once for me
Rang out a merry peal.
Wake! Let the echo of your glee
Upon my senses steal,
And may this melancholy find
Sweet solace in your voices kind.

Nay, mocking is your knell, and cold;
Not with so drear a note
The golden summer hours you told:
But now your echoes float
Like waves upon the lonely shore
Where Hope lies shipwrecked evermore.

And O, the lawns are desolate
Where grew the lilies tall;
No blackbird whistles to his mate
From out the ivied wall;
And ne'er again these ways among
Love's anthem shall for me be sung.

VANITAS VANITATUM.

THE swallow flies,
The sunset dies,
The wind is waking shrill,
The beech lets down
Her tresses brown,
The meads are sere and still.
Lord of the iron will,
Winter of thornéd holly,
Whose echoing dirges fill
Village, and twilight town,
With ruth of spring and folly,
Your long-drawn melancholy
Shall ne'er with sorrow drown
My heart, while Beauty's eyes
And old-time memories
The wine-cup crown.

A southern sky,
A white moon high
Above an avenue
Of sleeping plane ;

The plaintive strain.
  Of hidden streams, and you,
  With eyes of tenderer blue
Than velvet dusk of night,
  Threading mysterious through
The fretted beams that rain
The road with liquid light;
A moving sprite,
Now seen, now lost again,
Now far, now glimmering nigh,
Like some pale butterfly
        In mazes vain.

Illusive, rare
As empty air,
  Maiden and fairy sweet,
In dim wood pent,
Embodiment
  Of spring and the west wind fleet,
  Whose dripping silver feet
Kiss the young buds to birth,
  And, rippling o'er the wheat,
On a joyous mission bent,
With eddies of laughing mirth,
Humour the earth,

Till the gaunt Mother, spent
With the labour of days that were,
Loosed once more of her care,
Smiles, all content.

An idle dream!
Hope's transient gleam
Lights Fancy's realm alone.
For all my prayer,
That spirit fair
Into the dark is flown.
And, hark! the message blown
By the night-winds that pass:
"The shadowy vision shown
Was Love, the wanderer,
A phantom in a glass,
That leaves, alas!
The heart of comfort bare,
And makes the sordid scheme
Of life more sorry seem,
As he is fair."

CHRISTMAS ROSES.

CHRISTMAS roses, pure as snow,
Delicate as hoar-frost rime,
Yet, with golden hearts aglow,
Shining in your virgin prime,
Fair as Charity you show
In the churlish winter time.

Maids were ye in days gone by
To the cloister dedicate,
There to wither, wane, and die;
But, for pity of your fate,
Into flowers of January
Changéd was your cold estate.

FEBRUARY.

NOW swell the coral almond buds ;
The hazel catkins slim
Loose out their golden curls, where floods
The river to the brim.

Bullfinches in the orchard flaunt
Their glossy livery ;
The rooks once more the elm trees haunt :
Saint Valentine is nigh.

Now crocuses, with glimmering sheen
Of lance-heads, pierce the mould ;
A thousand ruffs of Lincoln-green
The aconites unfold.

The black gnats flicker in the sun,
Among the purpling thorns ;
You 'd think the spring-time had begun,
So loud they wind their horns.

But 'tis not spring, though who shall say
The rosy light of morn
Is nothing worth beside the day
In beauty's fulness born

UPON A LARK SINGING IN WINTER.

I WANDERED in the fields forlorn:
All gaunt the trees, and bare the earth
The west wind from the sun had torn
The sullen wrack, and, upward borne
Towards the blue, with sacred mirth,
A sky-lark fluttered through the morn.

Sweet singer, first the heart to cheer,
Before the missel-thrush has tried
His stormy pipes, or, chanting clear,
The blackbird greets the budding year,
Thou, to God's service sanctified,
Biddest the world His message hear.

O bird of hope, whose anthem fine
Is something more than mortal song,
Pour from the heart of things divine
A deeper comfort into mine;
And, held aloft on pinions strong,
Draw thou my soul to Heaven's shrine.

TO THE THRUSH.

O, WE are weary. Winter drear
Still holds the earth in thrall;
The snowflakes wander far and near,
And, 'neath their frozen pall,
The baby buds are wrapped in sleep,
While you Love's steadfast vigil keep:

You, faithful seer of hope supreme,
The high-priest of the Spring,
Whose faith is no illusive dream,
Whose office is to sing
Immortal April, that shall bring
To all the world sweet comforting.

And, haply, in those kinder days,
Wet February's boon,
When, mirrored in the full-brimmed ways,
Trembles the crescent moon,
Your voice, upraised in cadence strong,
As bells that call to evensong,

Shall preach the evangel of the wood,
  Designed, ere creeds were made,
To charm our grief with promise good,
  And wake in hearts afraid
The greater knowledge from on High
Of certain immortality.

For well you teach that flower and fall,
  The budding leaf, and sere,
Are, even as we, ephemeral,
  And have short tarrying here;
Yet move, like us, for ever on
From change to change in unison;

From dark to dawn, from death to life,
  From sleep to sleep again;
Through ages long of stress and strife,
  Through sunshine, cloud, and rain;
Toward the one and perfect goal,
Where Spring Immortal waits the soul.

THE TALE OF THE TREE.

THE TALE OF THE TREE.

I.

At the north end of our village there stood a wych elm tree. According to reliable computation it was about two hundred years old in 1898, when it fell.

WINTER and spring,
Sunshine and rain;
Loud bells that sing
Of joy and of pain;
Summer's delight,
Autumn repose;
The hours in their flight,
The fall of the rose:
All I have seen,
In youth and in age;
Blue skies serene,
The hurricane rage
Of tempest and flood;
Lightnings that glance
Through the wind-driven scud,
And the legion-advance

Of the black-armoured cloud,
Whose arrows have plied
My branches, and bowed
But ne'er broken my pride.
So have I known
The wonders of God,
And joyfully grown
From the rain-cherished sod,
From the seed in the earth,
From the spring-time of youth,
From the ring-time of mirth,
To the beauty and truth
And wisdom that years
Alone can beget,
Which sow not in tears,
Nor reap in regret.

II.

The "Queen Anne's Head," dated 1705, was so named out of compliment to Her Majesty, who changed horses there on the road to Windsor in that year. The Church was completed in 1321. Probably the cock was put up when the cross was restored in the seventeenth century.

ALL the long centuries through,
Ever the old swinging sign
Has creaked me a friendly "good morrow."
Summer and winter, we two
Have watched in foul weather and shine,
Comrades in joy and in sorrow.

Once we were three. On the top
Of the tower of Plantagenet's church,
The weather-cock gave us the news
From the north and the south, and would drop
A warning perchance from his perch,
And air his superior views

Of the beacon alight on the crest
Of the hills looking east o'er the sea,
Or number the lumbering wains
Creeping out of the woods to the west
From Windsor, with much pleasantry
On the mire of the Middlesex lanes.

But the builders climbed up to his throne,
And the tower disappeared from our ken
In a forest of poles, to the sound
Of the trowel sharp-struck on the stone,
And the hammers, and shouts of the men
As they swung the great cross to the ground.

And we thought that our Chanticleer bold
Had danced his last dance with the wind
And told his last tale to us two.
But when all was accomplished, behold,
The cross "John o' London" designed
Soared aloft, and against the soft blue

Of a high summer sky, there he stood,
And his feathers flashed gold in the light.
But, anon, with a sob and a moan
There came a great wind, and the wood
Trembled and swayed, and that night
The cross kept its vigil alone.

Now only the sign of Queen Anne—
Seventeen hundred and five—
And I, the old elm tree, remain:
We who together began;
I, when the Queen was alive,
A sapling the size of a cane.

III.

MDCCXXX.

According to tradition, the "Queen Anne's Head" was much frequented by highwaymen, notably King, and Dick Turpin, hanged 1739.

DING-DONG, ding-dong, ding-dong.
Twelve o'clock of a winter night.
Ding-dong, ding-dong, ding-dong.
The sentinel stars are alight,
And over the sleeping roofs
On the road to London town
The clatter of wheels and hoofs,
The night coach coming down.
Ding-dong, ding-dong, ding-dong.
Hark! there 's a horseman swings
Galloping hard along;
Frosty the iron rings.
"Thou on the fleet black mare,
With the crape on thy comely face,
And the gaily ribboned hair,
Borne on thy midnight race,
Whither so late through the dark?
Is it, hey for the King's highway!
Answer me, fair young Spark.
Hast thou no moment to stay?
Nay, but there waiteth a branch for thee,
And it groweth aloft on Tyburn tree."

Ding-dong, ding-dong, ding-dong.
One o'clock, and the world is a-cold.
Ding-dong, ding-dong, ding-dong.
The glittering moonbeams hold
In their thrall the virgin snows,
And icicles fringe the wall,
While the tower a shadow throws
Down the street like a funeral pall.
Ding-dong, ding-dong, ding-dong.
A shot through the silent air.
"Tireless steed, and strong,
Away with thy lord debonair!
But what though thou speed without fear,
Yet will thy strength be done,
For the hour draweth near
When thy last course shall be run.
Dance on the moonlit heath,
Velvet, and steel, and lace:
Thou art dancing the dance of death,
And there cometh, Sir Dickon, apace,
A coach that tarrieth not until
It setteth thee down on Tyburn hill."

IV.

MDCCCXIV.

The 57th Regiment was originally recruited from the Middlesex Militia. Nicknamed "Steelbacks," from their bearing under the hands of the Provost-Marshal, they won a more honourable title in the Peninsula. At Inkerman, the commanding officer at a critical moment bade the "Die Hards, remember Albuhera."

OVER the bridge at the head of the village,
There 's a glitter of bayonets bright
In the mellow light
Of the soft September morn :
See how the labourers run from the tillage,
And the reapers, cheering with all their might,
In boisterous flight
Stream from the golden corn !

Hark to the scream of the fifes and the drumming,
The drummers in yellow and white,
Eager and slight,
And the companies marching in fours !
Out, boys ! run, girls ! the soldiers are coming.
Never again will you see such a sight.
They 're the fellows to fight ;
The brave Fifty-Seventh ! Ours !

Trumpets and cymbal sound stirring carouses,
Drum-major stiff at the head
Of the gallants in red.
Maids with fair faces that shine
Like summer flowers from the grave old houses,
Say, would ye rather be wooed and be wed
By a 'prentice instead
Of a soldier of Wellington's line?

Steelbacks of Middlesex, where be the rest of you,
'Neath your colours tattered with shell,
Boldly and well
Carried aloft in a hundred fights?
Die Hards! Old Die Hards! God pity the best of you,
The four hundred and twenty that conquered and fell
In that fire of Hell
On the blood-stained Spanish heights!

Brown with the sun of the thirsty sierra,
Patient, slow to complain;
In sunshine and rain
Willing to do and to die:
Long shall our children acclaim Albuhera,
Reddest of all the red vintage of Spain.
Welcome again
And again! to our heroes we cry.

And what though the gallant battalion passes,
And the tramping companies end,
Brother and friend,
Sons of the Motherland true,
Here 's to you, Die Hards! and long shall our glasses
Tip to your pride, and, wherever we wend,
May kind fortune send
Us comrades as faithful as you.

Theirs the example of noblest devotion;
And when through the Inkerman morn
The reveillé is borne
And the bugles defiantly blow,
The heart of the soldier shall glow with emotion,
And Die Hards, recalling the victories worn
On their standards forlorn,
Shall sturdily face to the foe.

V.

MDCCCXCVII.

Queen Victoria's second Jubilee was celebrated June 22nd.

WITH the breath of the dawn awake,
From their delicate lint-white curls
The drowsy chestnuts shake
A shower of dewy pearls;

And the web the gossamer spun
In the light laburnum tresses
Melts as the amorous sun
Her golden bloom caresses.

Hark! to the resonant strains,
The beat and the swing of the chimes,
Stirring the blood in the veins
These peaceful humdrum times.

They 're out, and early to-day,
From gable to gable hung,
Garland and streamer gay
Wave over old and young.

Gaffer and Grannie who wooed
And wed in King William's days,
Who under my branches strewed
The flowers of bygone Mays,

And loitered many a night;
I see you still, but the snows
Have powdered your heads with white,
And feeble the fire glows.

It was not so hard to walk
To the tryst beneath my shade,
To simper, and sigh, and talk,
When they crowned the Royal Maid.

Your eyes were flashing then,
Your hearts beat strong and true:
Aye, but men were men,
And the women were women, too.

You are sure of it, Mistress Joan,
And Darby, to whom you cling.
But not for you alone
Was the magic and charm of spring.

And the sweethearts whisper low
In the deep green shadows yet,
And gather, as long ago,
Cowslip and violet.

You may babble of bygone days,
Staunch in your creed to the last,
But they smile at your old-world ways,
Nor believe in that wonderful past.

You may prate of the Farmer King
To the grandson upon your knee,
But to-day he is going to sing
A greater jubilee.

Nay, all 's for the best, and I,
Though the glamour of what is old
Clings closest to memory,
My faith in the present hold,

With a heart content and brave,
Unmoved by trouble and strife,
Thankful to Him who gave
The boon of this happy life.

And now I hear the guns,
  Wafted upon the breeze,
Where the Mother welcomes her sons
  From over the Seven Seas.

With the clang of the jubilant bells,
  And the roar of a million voices,
The great thanksgiving swells,
  And the heart of the land rejoices.

Away in the opal haze,
  With the glitter, and pomp, and pride
Of scarlet and steel ablaze,
  On to St Paul's they ride:

The pageant of peace. And we
  On the humble village green
Echo the jubilee
  Of our lovéd Mother and Queen.

Boys in their Sunday best,
  Girls in holiday trim
And royal ribbons dressed,
  Conscious, erect, and prim,

March to the old church door,
Where the surpliced quire stands,
And the strains of the organ pour
Like waves on the long sea-sands

"Thanks to our God we bring,
Kneeling before His throne;
Glory to God, we sing,
For the mercies He hath shown."

And now the procession 's gone,
The chords of the anthem cease,
And I keep my watch alone,
Alone in perfect peace.

For I know that my end draws near;
My leaves are green no more,
My branches are dry and sere,
And the sap shrinks to the core.

And ere the pitiful tears
Of another Autumn weep,
In the dust of all the years
My weary limbs shall sleep.

VI.

WINTER and Spring,
Sunshine and rain,
Wild bells that ring
The New Year again,
No more shall I mark
By the song of your chime
The dawn and the dark,
And the fleeting of time.
But thankful am I
At the setting of sun,
For 'tis easy to die
When our work is well done.

CLASSIC FANCIES.

Ἄγε δὴ χέλυ δῖά μοι
φωνάεσσα γένοιο.

Sappho.

THE MAGIC GRAMMAR.

To Lilian learning Greek.

THIS dull Grammar holds the keys
To the realms of poesy ;
Glimmering cities, fairy seas
Sleeping 'neath a summer sky.

Music sweeter than the birds
In the amber morning make,
Or the bells of upland herds,
From its dusty depths shall wake.

Tragedy, and Comic Muse,
At the mazy syntax' end
Wait for you, and you shall choose
One or both to be your friend.

When the tufted palms distil
Luscious honey, and the bees
Murmur low, our ears shall thrill
With songs that charmed Euripides.

And the lonely waterfall,
Echoing down the glen, for us
Shall sound the solemn trumpet call
Blown of old by Æschylus.

While the winds that wander through
The rustling pine-tree tops shall quire
Symphonies that Sappho drew
From her "lily-wreathéd" lyre.

We with Pericles shall walk
Through the streets of Athens, see
Temples hung with flowers, and talk
In the "Stoa Poicile."

We shall watch the incense rise
To the marble architraves;
Hear the mystic prophecies
Where the Pythian priestess raves;

See the rose-crowned vestals go,
All in white, with silver rods,
Marching, reverent and slow,
Round the altars of the gods.

We shall hear the talking oaks
In Dodona's leafy shade;
Sip the crystal stream that soaks
Through the green Castalian glade.

We shall hear the reed-pipe sweet
Through the mellow sunset drift,
As the dancers' rhythmic feet
Thread Arcadian measures swift;

With Theocritus shall roam
By the red Sicilian strand,
While the Nereids of the foam
Waft fresh kisses to the land.

We shall hear the clash of steel,
And the wail of foemen riven,
As the Persian squadrons reel,
Headlong to the ocean driven.

We shall hear the battle hymn
When the Spartan warriors pass
Through the morning twilight dim,
Led by stout Leonidas.

We shall hear the Chorus raise
  Pæans triumphant; and the dirge
Chanted to the hero's praise
  Where the funeral torches surge.

Guardians of Thermopylæ,
  For all time their voices sound!
Sons of Hellas, brave and free,
  With unfading laurel crowned.

Visions all! For in the dust
  Long have lain the gleaming fanes,
Lizard-haunted, and the rust
  Bright Athena's armour stains.

But, though things of beauty die,
  Noble deed and great endeavour,
Sanctified by poesy,
  Live within the heart for ever.

DANCE OF THE NYMPHS IN THE CAVE OF PAN.

From a marble in the British Museum.

ἀμφὶ δὲ σόι, ῥυθμοῖο κατὰ κρότον, ἔνθεον ἴχνος
ῥησσέσθω Νύμφαις ταῖσδε μεθυδριάσιν.
Alcaeus of Messene.

HERE, where the red pomegranate showers
Upon the sunburnt grasses,
Like spangled points of flame, her flowers,
And o'er the hidden myrtle bowers
The breath of summer passes;

Where, in the silence deeper made
By distant waters' leaping,
Whose echoes die, as though afraid
To break the enchantment of the glade
Where Pan his watch is keeping;

Hither, as daffodils that greet
The spring, with billowy dances,
To sound of flute and cymbal sweet,
A twinkling maze of argent feet,
The choric troop advances;

And, like the amber evening glow
O'er lily meadows streaming,
Their saffron silken vestures flow
In folds of wavering light, that show
The silver 'neath them gleaming.

Aloft their blooming garlands wave
To greet the sacred portal,
Where flames of spicy pinewood lave
The altar in the mystic cave
Of Pan, the god immortal.

And deathless they, this lovely band,
Of gods and men the pleasure,
For, on the breathing marble planned,
They dance for ever, hand in hand,
A never-ending measure.

THEOCRITUS IN SICILY.

I SEE him pass into the dawn
Across the cypress-sheltered close,
Across the daisy-tinselled lawn,
Ere from the beauty of the rose
The sun has kissed the dewdrops dry
That on her damask petals lie.

Beside the sleeping huts he goes,
Where lean the tunny-fishers' rods,
To where, in the pale twilight, glows
The guardian altar of the gods,
Who, with a kindly blessing, greet
The day's first suppliant at their feet.

Now to his brow a hand he lifts,
And, gazing o'er the burnished sea,
Marks where the golden sunlight drifts
Toward the cliffs of Sicily;
If, haply, down that pathway bright
Should come the Muse, his heart's delight.

The night dews glisten on his fleece,
  And shine like jewels in his hair:
A godlike son of ancient Greece,
  Divinely young, divinely fair.
A lyre of beaten gold he swings,
That takes the wind's harmonious wings,

And moulds the music of the breeze,
  The murmur of the lapping wave,
To soft Æolian cadences,
  Now loud and gay, now soft and grave;
And, with the moods of Nature one,
Echoes in perfect unison.

What though no more to these lone hills
  The wandering poet cometh nigh,
Nor, on the enchanted air, distils
  The honey of sweet poesy;
Yet every flower that Summer wreathes
The fragrance of his memory breathes.

THE POET'S GRAVE.

PERCHANCE, beside the wide blue sea,
Beneath the cliffs with mirage crowned,
At breathless noon, within the sound
Of waves that sang of old with thee,
Thou dreamest dreams of Sicily.

Dream on! The cistus bloweth still;
Their bleating flocks the shepherds drive;
And, fragrant as the summer hive,
A balmy breath the vines distil
That all the air with incense fill.

Dream on! For still sweet memories throng
This sunburnt earth, enwrapped in peace,
Though mute the golden lyre of Greece;
And still the rustling pines prolong
The echoes of thy rustic song.

AT THE SETTING OF THE PLEIADES.

περὶ δύσιν Πλειάδος.

THE Pleiades, the Sisters Seven,
Are keeping watch from the towers of heaven;
Keeping their watch as long ago,
When the dear gods walked the earth below;
Or moving, a bevy of maidens light,
Through the velvet dusk of the summer night,
Over the firs and the mountain snows,
Mirrored, perchance, where the rivulet flows:
Now dreaming awhile in the midnight cool
At the scented fringe of some woodland pool;
Now floating away, and sinking ever
As the red ripe fruits from the branches sever,
And the veil of the autumn rain is drawn
Over field and flood, over forest and lawn;
Fleeing away, with tears that seem
On flower and leaf the diamonds' gleam—
Tears for the ruth of beauty shed
With the fall of the rose, and the summer sped.

PERSEPHONE.

SOMETIMES in April evenings,
When the storm has passed and died,
Night on her dewy pinions brings
A Vision glorified.

Pale is her face as the sleeping flowers
Beneath the white moon-rise;
Far streams her hair in misty showers,
Shrouding her starry eyes.

And, deep and full as the voice of the river,
Her words through the twilight ring:
"I am she who liveth for ever,
The peerless, immortal Spring.

"Far away in the halls of Death
I heard the Mother's cry
That sighed through the land of dreams, with the breath
Of my deathless destiny.

"And lo! the wan-cheeked asphodel
Flushed with a sudden ray
That drew me up through the gates of Hell
To the splendour of Life and Day.

"O Father Zeus, from thy stainless towers
On the snows of Olympus, mark
How the old World smiles to her baby flowers,
And sings once more with the lark.

"And what though my temples tall be riven,
And the fires on my altar wane,
I, by the right of thy promise given,
With April come again.

"Nay, the streams that from the mountains cail,
And kiss my hastening feet,
Are tears of joy that the clouds let fall
When Mother and Daughter meet.

"And thou, dear Earth, forget thy pain:
O'er the crocus fields I come,
With the rosy-footed Hours in my train,
To the land that I love, my home."

PAN.

GREEN arches; trees that bend and meet
Above the babbling river;
Faint fairy-dancing mists of heat
That o'er the rushes quiver:
When June comes in with meadow-sweet,
And bowers of eglantine,
Then shall you see, with cloven feet,
Half-human, half-divine,

Pan, moving through the conscious night,
And tuning to his reeds
Love's tyrant universal might,
Life's dear imperious needs.
O, come and rest upon the light
Warm-breathing earth, and hear
The mysteries his lips recite,
Shrill, wonderful, and clear.

His voice is in the poplar grove,
Among the branches tall,
And, where the blithe cicadas rove,
They chant his madrigal;

And his the joy, all joys above,
That moves the nightingale
To lift his rapturous psalm of love
Among the hawthorns pale.

The waves that o'er the ocean sweep,
And, laughing, onward pass;
The myriad dreamy pipes that keep
Long vigil in the grass,
When summer lands are locked in sleep,
And drowsy shepherds nod;
All echo, with contentment deep,
The music of the god.

For he the primal force imparts
That through the great world stirs;
From him all living impulse starts
Who, of his grace, confers
The joy of life upon our hearts,
Love's perfect happiness—
A boon beyond all mortal arts
To summon, or express.

MY LADY OF DREAMS.

IVORY white is her face,
And ivory white her hand,
Instinct with the delicate grace
The wise Greek sculptor planned
For the virgin Deity
Who ruled in the Attic land.
So, in the days gone by,
The splendour of Artemis beamed,
When her bow in the heaven was hung,
And the jewelled starlight streamed
Through night's blue canopy, flung
Over the sacred hill,
Where, fairest of all among
The temples of Hellas, still
Watches the Parthenon.
And wherever her footsteps passed
They said 'twas the moon that shone;
A light in the darkness cast;
A lantern for poets lit;
A joy to the heart, so vast

That the whole world sighed for it.
And, even as the moth aspires
To the flames with steadfast eyes,
And, reaching at last the fires,
In a pitiless triumph dies;
So, where your beauty gleams,
My wandering spirit flies
Through the shadowy bourne of dreams.

AFTER THE GREEK OF AGATHIAS.

HER lips to yield to me too shy,
My Cynthia from her breast
A ribbon raised demurely,
And kisses on it pressed.

As one who, with hot fever spent,
To some cool conduit strains,
So I toward her streamer bent,
To soothe love's cruel pains,

And up the silken way my course,
With Hope as pilot, set,
Till, at her kisses' honied source,
Our hearts united met.

SONG OF THE CHILDREN OF RHODES.

IN the days of long ago,
Came the swallow from the south,
With a message in his mouth :
" Spring is here ! The soft winds blow ! "

Thus the happy children sang
In the days of long ago,
And the island-city rang :
" Spring is here, we know, we know."

Flowers from dust forgotten grow,
Vanished are the children all,
But once more the swallows call,
As in days of long ago :
" Spring is here ! The soft winds blow !
Spring is here, we know, we know ! "

From the original Greek.
ἦλθ', ἦλθε χελιδών.

THE swallow is here,
With the sweet of the year,
The beautiful spring.
Snow-white is his breast,
Dark as night is his crest.
Of your courtesy bring
Out a cake, and explore
Your bountiful store
For a goblet of wine.
A morsel of cheese,
Too, and porridge of peas,
With bread kneaded fine,
The swallow requests.
If you grant our behests,
We 'll be good. Answer nay,
Then lintel and gate,
Nest and snug little mate,
We 'll carry away!
But if you are kind,
Good luck you shall find.
So, doors open all
To the swallow to-day!
'Tis children at play,
Not grown-ups, who call!

HER JEWELLED PENDANT.

SIMÆTHA in the cave forlorn,
Still crooning o'er her magic wheel,
What time the silver feet of morn
Across the sleeping ocean steal:

Calypso in her lonely isle,
Distraught on Love's relentless rack,
Striving against the gods by guile
To lure the lost Odysseus back:

As through the empty shores they wend,
Methinks, upon their ivory necks
Such flashing talismans depend
As that which now your bosom decks.

Yet are such things but vanities
For you, to whom the power is given,
By the enchantment of your eyes,
To draw the very stars from heaven.

THE UNCHANGING GODS.

BY legend-haunted coasts I sail,
And, with the winds that seaward float
From thyme-strewn cape, and lotos vale,
My thoughts move idly as my boat.

Old times are changed. No more the air
Is magic with the Siren song,
No more the conquering navies fare
The red Sicilian cliffs along.

The marble quays, where once the ships
Flashed splendid as the stars of morn,
Are silent all, and empty slips
The tide o'er harbour bars forlorn.

The lizards in the noonday heat
Blink drowsy on the crumbling stone
Where once the gods were wont to meet
About Poseidon on his throne;

And through the columns, bare and gaunt,
That ever sounded with their praise,
The weariless cicadas chaunt
The burning length of summer days.

Old times are changed. Yet here, perchance,
As fair as 'neath the moon of yore,
The feet of dancing Nereids glance
Like waves upon the golden shore.

And still the Triton conchs resound
When Aphrodite of the foam,
With loveliness immortal crowned,
They bring again in triumph home.

They are not changed; but changed are we,
Whose alien eyes but mist descry
When rises from the halcyon sea
The sweetly smiling Deity.

And though deserted be the shrine
Where once the votive offerings hung,
And, wreathed with clusters of the vine,
No more aloft the thyrse be flung;

Yet oft upon the scented breeze
The hymn of Dionysus strays,
And in the murmuring of the trees
The laughter of the Nymphs delays;

And through the billows, silver flecked,
Where sportive dolphins plunge and leap,
With shining wheels, and ore-weed decked,
The chariots of the Sea-God sweep.

But we, engrossed by sordid quest,
No longer heart's content may find
In simple faith, to what is best
And beautiful for ever blind;

While the rare voices of the spheres,
That fill the earth with music fine,
Fall meaningless upon the ears
That nothing count of things divine.

A DREAM OF BATH.

"*Aquæ Solis.*"

A HEAVEN of blue—yet not so clear
As are the skies of Italy,
But with our northern haze bestrewn
Like powdered amber; and, on high,
Wide looming clouds—the clouds of June—
Majestic galleons that steer
Before the trireme of the sun.

Upon the hills, among the groves
With summer's canopy o'erlain,
Fair marbles in the noontide gleam
From palace tall, and pillared fane,
That ring the vale where Avon's stream
Between the verdurous rushes moves,
Like pearl in jade mosaic spun.

Long ere these shining temples stood
Amid the dark primeval girth
Of forest-land, from out the deep
And seething cauldrons of the earth
The hot springs welled, and here would creep
The broken creatures of the wood,
To crave the healing water's boon.

So, when the dells were all afire,
And leaves lay crimson on his track,
The wild-boar, torn by rival fierce,
Or stricken sore by wolf's attack,
The tangled undergrowth would pierce,
And wallow in the oozy mire,
Beneath the chill October moon.

And erst there came a hunter king
Hard on the quarry in his lair:
Wondering upon the brink he stands
To see the chase-worn harts repair,
Wide-eyed, beside the smoking sands,
Ere yet into the tide they fling,
And leap again revived to earth.

Now all is changed; each glade a street,
The fretted alleys colonnades,
Hung with fresh wreaths of lilies white,
And purple iris twined in braids
With scented bays, where Wealth and Might
Beneath the Eagle's pinions meet
Secure by right of Roman birth.

See where they march, with pride of race,
The glittering legions; at their head,
Swung in his chariot, lord supreme,
With victor laurel garlanded,

Immovable, his eyes agleam
With light of conquest, and the grace
Of those who walk serene with Fate,

Imperial Cæsar's Governor.
And though the surging trumpets' storm,
The shouting spearmen, and the tramp
Of horsemen pass, that godlike form
Outshines all time, as burns the lamp
Of some great star, above the roar
Of hurrying winds inviolate.

Now shadows lengthen o'er the meads;
The priestess wakes the sacred pyre
On Vesta's altar; and, anon,
The minstrel, bending to his lyre,
Recounts the deeds of heroes gone,
While through the hall the wine-cup speeds,
With nectar of Falernus fraught.

Wide swing to Æsculapius dear
The gates of bronze, and through the steam
Of waters, fringed with green arcades,
The sunset slants; and, as a dream
That in a mirage wanes and fades,
Half seen, the bathers' forms appear
Like statues pale in ivory wrought.

Or on soft couches spread with flowers,
  Anointed with Arabian oil,
In languid majesty reclined,
  Like to the gods, who neither toil
Nor share the ills of human kind,
The sleek Patricians fleet the hours,
  To sound of dulcimer and flute.

Or, as the Nymphs of hill and dale
  Who tend Diana at the pool,
When, bow and buskin laid aside,
  Beneath the ilex sheltering cool,
They shame the water-lily's pride,
The Beauties of the south unveil,
  O'er meaner beauties absolute.

The scene dissolves. The baths again
  Are silent. Where the feast was crowned
The lizard basks; through empty doors
  The voices of the birds resound;
Upon the moss-grown marble floors
The briar-roses gently rain;
  And in the dust Rome's glories lie.

Only the sobbing river breathes
  Her ancient triumphs, and repeats
The story of her race sublime.
  Yet once again, behold! new streets,

Thronged at the blessed Christmas-time,
When Christian swords rest in their sheaths,
With pomp of Norman chivalry.

The candles waver in the gloom;
The painted window-panes are filled
With saints in glory. Full and sweet,
As balm upon the spirit spilled,
The bells with iron music greet
The Christ Child in His lowly room;
And rich with frankincense and myrrh

The censers fume. Like echoing wings
Of angels borne, the organ chords
Thrill the dim aisles. Above the heads
Of knights-crusader, squires, and lords,
The fiery cross a halo sheds;
And through the dark the watchword rings,
"God's Will—the Holy Sepulchre!"

The voices hush. With portent dire,
Blooms the red rose of Lancaster;
Or see, loose-reined, and scattered wide,
The Cavaliers defeated spur
Before the thunderous Ironside,
Till, loud proclaimed from spire to spire,
The King enjoys his own once more.

Peace after strife. The beacon flames
No longer through the frightened night.
Where walked the Puritans with staid
Unbending eyes, in satin dight
And witchery of flowered brocade
The powdered ladies of St. James'
From curtained chairs soft glances pour ;

Or, where the mellow sconces shine
On buckled shoon, and rapier bright,
To lilt of strings and clarinet,
With footsteps as the breezes light,
They tread the stately minuet,
With bow superb, and curtsey fine,
The very pearl of formal grace.

So moves the pageant. Now forlorn
With futile hope, now with a cry
Of passionate longing, to the shore
Where all the ages meet, pass by
Men and fair women evermore ;
Like bubbles to the surface borne
That glitter, break, and leave no trace.

A DEDICATION TO ARTEMIS.

σὺ δ'ἐυθήρου τοῦδ' ὑπέρισχε δρίου.
Mnasalcas.

LADY Huntress of the wold,
With thy silver-footed maids,
Threading swift the dappled glades;
Virgin resolute and cold,
To thy shrine this offering
Of flowers, chaste as thou, I bring:

Asphodels, that through the stems
Of the darkling ilex show
White as the immortal snow
That Olympus diadems;
Lilies, whose fair petals shine
Lustrous as thy breast divine,

With the fresh narcissus twined,
And the milky-blossomed heath.
Lo! I weave a votive wreath;
Therefore, Artemis, be kind,
So good fortune, by thy grace,
Ever 'tend me in the chase.

THE BOOK OF BELLE MARQUISE.

Not for myself, but, Sweet, for thee,
And the delight thy beauty wears,
I would that I might win from Fate
For this my dear-loved poesy
The gift of the immortal heart;
That so thou should'st with them be mate
Who, far beyond the ruth of years,
Shine constant as the stars above,
Of all the ages made a part
By virtue of a poet's love.

BELLE MARQUISE.

O BELLE Marquise, O belle Marquise!
The magic of the crimson rose
Upon your lovelier self bestows
The fragrant charm of far-off Mays
And summer days
Vanished, and whither gone—who knows?

And O, the dainty powdered hair
That frames your face divinely fair,
The velvet patches, and the lace,
Recall the grace
Of stately times, and debonair.

O belle Marquise, O belle Marquise!
Upon my sense enchanted dies
The lilt of old-world minstrelsies;
And starry fires, whose lights outshone
The Trianon,
I see reflected in your eyes.

Yet not the freshest flowers that grew
In all the gardens of St. Cloud,
Or with their April beauty wooed
The pensive mood
Of Ronsard's lyre, were sweet as you.

O belle Marquise, O belle Marquise!
Take heed, for soon December's rime
Will blanch the gold of beauty's prime,
And you, as roses proud, shall learn
How swift return
The weary hours of winter time.

But, though the bird of youth take wing,
And age its disenchantment bring,
Yet shall the envious year's despite
But make more bright
The memory of your perfect spring.

MY LADY OF SNOWS.

UPON my Lady's whiter breast
My longing eyes may trace,
Like foam by moonlit seas caressed,
A veil of dainty lace:
Thrice happy lace, I would that I
Might share with thee her charity.

But I, consumed by Love's great fire,
In torment day and night,
Burn, all unheeded, on the pyre
Her flashing glances light;
And ever pray to her in vain
To loose me of my cruel pain.

Her heart is winter-cold, I know,
But if, to quench the flame,
I to that sanctuary of snow,
A favoured pilgrim, came,
Methinks the ice would melted be,
And cooled the fire that scorches me.

LOVE'S CORONAL.

I RIFLED from the poppy's store
Rubies incarnadine;
A string of gleaming emeralds tore
From off the leafy vine.

Then, from the larkspur's tender whorls,
I plucked the azure bloom,
And stole the love-sick lily's pearls,
Faint flashing through the gloom.

And thus I made a garland meet,
With many a flowery gem,
To offer at my Lady's feet,
A worthy diadem.

TRANS MARE.

LOVE is a thing apart,
Inviolate,
A song of heart to heart;
As bird to mate,
So wingeth mine to thee.

I, far away, the light
Of Love have seen,
Where, from thy palace white
Of virgin sheen,
Thou leanest out to me.

Drawn from the utmost earth,
As swallows fly;
Glad with the sober mirth
Of one whom high
Emprise of fate would dare;

Obedient to thy thrall
Through night and day,
I come, adventuring all,
That so I may
Win me a guerdon fair.

SWEET SEVENTEEN.

"SHE 'S pretty, she 's pretty, she 's pretty,"
Sings the throstle exultant and free;
And "She 's sweet, sweet, sweet," sings the linnet
Who lives in the pink almond tree.
Search all the world through, and within it,
Wherever the spring-time may be,
In flower-crowned village and city,
No maiden is fairer than she.

Her cheeks as the morning are blushing,
Her eyes are twin heavens of blue,
Her breast is the bloom of the cherry,
Her lips the red nectarine's hue;
And her voice as the skylark is merry,
When she passes the meadow-land through
With gossamer feet, hardly brushing
The spangles of diamond dew.

The leaves whisper softly above her,
And shake out their pennons of green
For the Spirit of Spring, and the sister
Of April, Love's virginal Queen.
O, happy the sun that has kist her
Among the anemones' sheen!
O, happy the heart of her lover!
My Lady of Sweet Seventeen.

QUEEN OF THE MAY.

MY Love is as a lily fair;
No star that hangs her lamp in air
Is half so bright as she.
So here, beneath the beeches green
Of Arcady, we 'll crown her Queen
With due solemnity.

The tuneful birds, that hidden crowd
'Mong leafy boughs, shall herald loud
Her virtues and her grace,
Who is the true embodiment
Of Spring, and to these glades has lent
The sunshine of her face.

And daisies pied shall smiling greet
Their sister who is far more sweet
Than e'en the deities
Whose sylvan feet press light the sward;
And they shall win for their reward
The wonder of her eyes.

Her hair is like the billowy corn
That in the freshets of the morn
Sweeps o'er the dappled leas;
And though she be as marble white,
Her kiss is summer's full delight.
So here, beneath the trees,

We 'll weave a wreath of poppy flowers
To chain and hold the fleeting hours
In Love's enchanted thrall;
Since, when we meet, the envious day
Makes all too soon to speed away,
Too soon the shadows fall.

A MORNING SONG.

FRESH as daisies on the lawn
In the sparkling summer dawn,
Sweeter than all birds that sing,
Hear my Lady carolling.
Lark, in your heavenward flight,
Whose hymn ascends,
Trembles, and ends
In pure delight;
Thrush, on the topmost spray,
Whose matins greet
With numbers meet
The wakening day;
Tell me, tell me, if so rare
As my Lady young and fair,
Shows Aurora in her pride
When the gates of morn swing wide;
Or, among the woodland quire,
Is there minstrel shall aspire
With the music of her voice?
Wherefore will my heart rejoice,
And her coming greet we all
With a merry madrigal.

Not because my Love discloses
From between the fragrant roses
Of her lips those smiling pearls;
Not because her careless curls
Flaunt the wind, and in her eyes
Such a wealth of beauty lies;
Not because her voice is low
And sweet as waves that ebb and flow;
But because all virtues show
In herself, I love her so;
And, for this, she is to me
All that loveliness should be.

AMOR REDIVIVUS.

I THOUGHT my sounding lyre was stilled,
Its joy for ever taken ;
But, when I heard your voice, Love willed
Its music should awaken.

The lamps of Heaven, methought, were spent ;
The night waxed dim and hoary ;
But, when you smiled, the firmament
Shone out again in glory.

And that great light which lit the skies
In olden days of rapture,
Within the sunshine of your eyes
Love bade me to recapture.

LOVE'S MAGNET.

SOMEWHERE beneath the moon,
Or far, or near,
Later or soon,
I shall meet thee, Dear.

As from her southern home
The swallow flieth
When April 's come,
And Winter dieth;

So, by Love's magnet drawn,
Though distant far
From the gates of the dawn
As the evening star,

I shall come at last to thy side,
Swift, silently,
As the planets glide,
With never a cry;

And thou wilt be there, my Heart,
As long before,
When, sundered apart
In the life of yore,

Our souls, on the wings of Time,
Sped each its way
From the Source Sublime
To the light of the day.

Yea, I shall know thee sure,
My twin, for the fires
Of Heaven make pure
Our great desires;

And even as streams, unclean
From the Earth's embrace,
In the radiant sheen
Of the sea find grace,

So shall my self, again
Made one with thee,
White, without stain,
Immortal be.

LOVE, THE TRAITOR.

AH me! the grace,
The tresses set
By Love, a net
About her face;
And for a lure
Such sparkling eyes
As promise sure
Sweet treacheries!
'Gainst which no man,
Nor fool, nor wise,
Since first began
Love's great emprise,
Did e'er divine
True amulet.

For Love appears
At first a thing
That has no sting
To wake our fears;
A bee that brings
But honey; yet,
While close he clings,
Begins the fret

Of bitter tears—
    The long regret
That all the years
    Shall not forget,
Nor new Love win
    To quieting.

MADONNA MIA.

YOU are so fair, I cannot but love you,
As I love the stars in the heaven above you,
As I love the flowers by the southern wall,
The virgin lilies white and tall,
The stainless flowers
That April showers
From her lovely lap when swallows call.

And those soft eyes, may I not win them?
And the blue forget-me-nots within them,
May I not gather them, too, to be worn
On my heart? And those lips, like the blush of the morn
In the dewy prime
Of the glad spring-time,
Shall they wither and fade, of love forsworn?

Grant me but leave to weave at your feet, Dear,
A garland of poesy tender and sweet, Dear;
For, as for the minstrel song divine
Of the nightingale quire the linnets pine,
So do I seek
A power to speak
With eloquence meet of the joy that is mine.

MATINS.

IN the gray twilight,
When the bright stars pale,
And light mists sail
In shadowy flight;

When the air is filled
With the fragrance fine
Of summer wine
By the rose distilled;

When the faint winds shake
The silver mere,
And far and near
The thrushes wake;

Come to me, Sweet,
And, at the shrine
Of Love divine,
Our hearts shall greet

The primal hours;
And pray with me
Our souls may be
White as the flowers.

DAWN.

THROUGH the tender silvery sheen
Of the dawn,
O'er the glimmering lawn,
From between

The sleeping birches, fair
To my sight
As a Dryad light,
With her hair

Caught in the breeze, like a flame
Shining clear,
My Mistress dear
To me came.

And the drowsy flowers, as she spoke,
Smiled and stirred,
And the answering bird
Music woke;

While, even as she passed, behold!
From the day
The curtains of gray
Mist unrolled.

FLOWERS OF THE WIND.

DEEP on the alpine slope, a stream
Of sunlight pouring free,
Golden anemones' light petals gleam:
Yet fairer still my Lady's locks I see,
Fit coronal supreme
For maiden majesty.

Wherefore I pray thee, Sweet, no more refuse
To give to Love, the honey-bee,
His rightful toll, ere yet your beauties lose
Their bloom; for, at the touch of Winter, flee
Spring's delicate fresh hues,
Nor shall Time wait for thee.

And, as these flowers, for whom the zephyrs pined,
Must bow to Fate's decree,
And of their loveliness leave naught behind
Save the lean stems that strew the barren lea
With gossamer, of wind
And storm the mockery;

So, ere among thy curls the years shall trace
A frosty filagree,
And ban the blushing roses from thy face
To where the roses of all ages be,
Yield of thy dainty grace
To mirth, and Love, and me.

NIGHT IN THE WOODS.

THE moon climbs up behind the fir,
A globe of golden fire;
The night-winds in the lilac stir
My heart with fond desire;
For all the stars that gem the skies
Are watching o'er me with thine eyes.

Thy scented breath upon the dark
From hidden flowers is blown,
And every shadow that I mark
Into thy form is thrown,
And lullabies the leaves among
Thrill with the echo of thy song.

So, through the solitude of night,
Thy gracious influence streameth,
And a fair temple of delight
This dreaming woodland seemeth,
Where I may walk with thee alone
In lovers' high communion.

ROSE D'AMOUR.

LET men speak ill or well of thee,
What do I care?
Be it evil or good they tell of thee,
Thou art my Fair;
And, being mine, what matters the rest?

There are a hundred smiling flowers
In the garden close,
But only one Queen of the summer hours,
June's perfect rose:
What more should he ask who plucketh the best?

Behold, a myriad cressets bright
The sky bedizen!
But only one Moon the world can light;
So she be risen,
Who shall regard the lesser gold?

For every heart there is but one
True counterpart.
What 's worth the living, have I not won
Thy peerless heart,
Since earth for me naught else shall hold?

LOVE'S ENCHANTMENT.

IN the heart of the gem the fire
Of the world's desire,
As the autumn sunset red
When the day is fled;
Spangles of jewelled light
Where streamers bright
From surging torches wave
In the elfin cave.

Ruby that dazzles the sight
With vain delight;
Eerie illusive flame
That naught shall tame,
Hither and thither tossed,
Now found, now lost;
Little I fear the harm
Of your magic charm.

But, when the lightning flies
From my Lady's eyes,
Even as the moth that flings
His desperate wings
In the blinding lantern's gleams;
So, in the beams
Of her levin glances caught,
My heart distraught
Burns with the pitiless pain
Of Love's disdain.

LOVE AND THE STARS.

THEY who to flowers their love compare,
Fair as the dawn, and sweet with summer's breath,
Have never tasted of that passion rare
Which knows not death.

For, though the morn is beautiful, the breeze
That fans the gleaming leaves a joyful thing,
Yet is Love's influence deeper far than these,
Nor fades with spring.

A little time the rose her splendour wears,
The winds of summer vanish and are gone;
But Love of the immortal essence shares
A part alone.

Far down the dusk of ancient days, behold!
Like stars upon the night's wide champain goes
A goodly pageant, diademed with gold,
The train of those

Whom Love has sanctified. And where, among
The lesser constellations, planets flame,
They are the eternal lamps by poets hung,
And lit with fame.

And what though, in the ages yet to come,
The world grows cold, all things created die;
Still shall their light illumine heaven's dome,
And Time defy.

HEARTS' COMMUNION.

BETWEEN us roll the seas,
Between us loom the mountains,
Long downs and meadow leas,
Forests, and sparkling fountains;
Yet, Sweet, they are not separate
Whose hearts in Love's communion mate.

Methinks yon shadowy hills
Are blue turquoises; a string
Of diamond beads the rills;
And dancing waves, that fling
Their sapphires o'er the gleaming main,
Gems that compose a mystic chain:

A chain that Time and space
With peerless strength defies,
Whose units interlace
All that between us lies;
So Death himself would strive in vain
To break the precious bond in twain.

SOME DAY.

DEAREST, some day, some day,
When I am passed away,
Love's dreaming over;
When, the May morning long,
Bees, with laborious song,
Quest the white clover;

When o'er the azure seas,
Swift on the homing breeze,
Swallows are fleeting,
And every happy bird
In the lush woodland heard
Giveth thee greeting;

When the silk buds unfold,
And, all in white and gold,
Meadows are shining:
Then shalt thou think of me,
Garlands of rosemary
Twining, and twining.

APRÈS.

PERCHANCE, when I am dead and gone,
And sleep beneath the sward alone,
The nightingale shall sing;
And, through the summer twilight borne,
To you the incense of the thorn
A thought of me shall bring.

And what though Time hath seared the rose,
And powdered be with winter snows
The glory of thy hair;
Though dim the starlight of thine eyes,
And naught remain but memories
Of all the joys that were;

The magic essence of the flowers
Shall breathe across the immortal bowers
In Youth's green garden set,
And in the nightingales' sad strain
Thou, too, shalt hear the song again
I sang of love's regret.

REVERIE.

I WONDER, Sweet,
If, when you watch alone
The fire o' nights,
Or when the poplars moan,
And fitful lights
Flash from the windy stars,
And o'er the foaming bars
The restless waters flow,
You think of long ago.
I wonder, Sweet!

I wonder, Sweet,
If, in the embers red,
You build again
The scenes for ever fled,
And, in the strain
And sorrow of the wind,
The voice of Fate unkind
Sounds sadly, as to me,
For love that might not be.
I wonder, Sweet!

I wonder, Sweet,
If, when the world is past,
And stars, and stream,
Shall be to us at last
Naught but a dream;
If, at the shadowy gates
Where Love triumphant waits,
Our hearts shall meet once more
As in the days of yore.
I wonder, Sweet!

LOST LOVE.

O THOU whose voice is poesy,
Linked with the spirit rare
Of wandering rivulet, and breeze,
And bird in April fair;
In vain
My faltering numbers strain
To seize
The echo of thy song,
And solace with a memory
The heart's immortal wrong.

And if thy kisses sweeter fall
Than drops of honied wine,
And, bright as stars in winter dark,
Thy peerless glances shine,
What gain
Were it the cup to drain,
Or mark
The glories of the night,
Since earth and heaven must e'er recall
The sense of lost delight?

THE PASSING OF LOVE.

A mournful Villanelle to be sung in the Mask by Melancholy.

THE wind of winter sadly blows;
Darkness broods upon the land:
Love into the midnight goes.

Warm within the firelight glows;
He without the door must stand:
The wind of winter sadly blows.

Ah! what bitterness he knows,
From my Lady's favour banned:
Love into the midnight goes.

Deeper, deeper drift the snows;
Fainter ebbs the failing sand:
The wind of winter sadly blows.

Spectre-thin the poplar shows,
Beckoning with shadowy hand:
Love into the midnight goes.

Fast in death his eyelids close,
Lady, at your cold command:
The wind of winter sadly blows;
Love into the midnight goes.

A DIRGE.

VIOLETS, purple and white!
Yew, black yew!
In a funeral wreath unite;
And my salt tears' dew
Shall sprinkle the shroud of my Love,
Bitter, and bitter-sweet,
With a lily fair at her feet,
And a lily her head above.

Violets, purple and white!
Yew, black yew!
For days that were swift in their flight,
And joys that shall never renew.
And I would, alas! that my pain
Could pass with your fading leaves,
And the heart that lonely grieves
In my true Love's grave be lain.

THRENODY.

DARK cypress bring,
And bitter yew,
Her bed to strew.
Let no bird sing
Above the stone
Where all alone
My Lady lies.

Hushed be all sound
Of mourning kind;
And may the wind
About her mound
On tiptoe creep,
Nor vex her sleep
With fruitless sighs.

ACROSS THE STREAM.

O VOICE beloved, whose haunting melodies
Sound faint and far upon the dim green hills
Of days long faded hence,
To-night—I know not whence—your spirit cries
Across the void, and all my being thrills
With your sweet influence,

Until I see you, Love, once more as when
The world was young, and we in may-time went
Clinging together close,
Beside the river where the willow-wren
Scattered her tiny spring-song of content,
And the first blushing rose

Smiled down upon us from the garden plot,
To see two hearts as happy as her own.
Do you recall among
Your asphodels the true forget-me-not
We garlanded, and are the breezes blown
O'er meads Elysian, long,

Wistful, and tender as the western wind
That gave us benison with gentle breath?
Or is it but a dream
That those who all too soon have passed behind
The shadowy curtain, which we men call death,
Aught of such pleasure deem?

It may be—yet I fain would disbelieve
You left our sight, and, like a summer flower,
Drooped, and for ever passed;
For, were it so, what profits it to sheave
Our golden hopes, and in the darker hour
Hold this one solace fast:

That Love, at least, from the Immortal flows,
And, being itself Immortal, still survives
The changes of all time?
Methinks, if no such fire Promethean glows,
If no such certain faith inspires our lives,
And there be naught sublime

Within us, then are we as beasts that grope
In intellectual blindness, and in vain
For higher things we crave;
Since we have raised ourselves on very hope,
The hope that hearts dissevered join again,
And Love defies the grave.

TECUM.

WHEN I am dead,
Grant me to lie, I pray,
By her dear side,
That no rank weeds may grow,
But flowers blow
About my head;
And may my ashes rest
Upon her breast,
That so they may
Be sanctified.

HEREAFTER.

Dans les champs Elysées une mesme navire
Nous passera tous deux.

RONSARD.

SWEET, if thy spirit be to mine
Companion in the spheres,
Where live all things, and thoughts divine
Beyond the ruth of years;
If it may be thy influence
Into my soul shall pour,
For me what greater recompense
Of love has Heaven in store?

O, it were past all joy to know,
Since parted here we be,
That into one our selves shall flow
As raindrops in the sea;
And that, beyond life's little groove,
Our spirits, ranging high,
Ever in one shall onward move
To deathless destiny.

LOVE'S PASSING.

ALL night the rain a-weeping
Upon the flowers fell,
And the autumn tempest sweeping
Wailed out their funeral knell.

O days of spring departed!
O roses sere and dead!
O nightingale faint-hearted!
Where is your music fled?

Cold winter in the garden
Weaves white a winding sheet;
The fitful raindrops harden
To tears of icy sleet;

The trees give up their glory,
And faint the last leaves gleam;
Love ends his fairy-story,
And shattered is his dream.

LOVE AND HOPE.

YOU are passing hence, Old Year:
Once again,
Fateful, and plain,
I, listening, hear
The far-off bells
Tolling, tolling slow,
Over the bleak snow:
Now loud upon the wind,
Now faint, the echoes die;
And, with a long-drawn sigh,
Your last breath swells,
Trembles, and fades,
Silent for evermore.

'Tis not for you alone,
Watching here
Your death-bed drear,
I make my moan:

You go to meet
The thousand blessèd years,
With all their hopes and fears;
But, ah! for me no kind
Inexorable call
Upon my ears shall fall,
With summons sweet
To those dear shades
Where dwells my Love of yore.

Full is the conscious night
Of memories.
The faint wind sighs
For summer's flight,
And bygone hours,
The tender hours of youth,
The hours of love and truth;
And, from the shadow-land,
Behold! a figure sad,
In misty garments clad,
Fair as the flowers,
Whose eyes are wet
With gracious balm of tears.

Her wan lips flutter. Hush!
Methinks they frame
A sacred name:
The pale cheeks flush:—

"I am thy soul's
True complement, the one,
When life for thee is done,
Who by thy side shall stand,
The Immortal of thy heart:
And, what though now apart
As are the poles,
Together yet
Our stars shall roam the spheres.

"Hast thou forgotten, Dear,
How once of old,
In days of gold,
When, far and near,
High heavenward borne,
The skylarks sang, we went
On love's sweet mission bent?
Hast thou a heart's delight,
Elsewhere, so perfect found
As when the spring we crowned
With bridal thorn,
And hand in hand
We mocked the threads of Fate?

"Among the apple blowth
Love bade us follow:
But, as the swallow
That flieth south

When north winds ring
The knell of roses dead,
Our fleeting joys were sped,
And, lonely here to-night,
Thou, too, alas! dost know
What ever shall be so,
How vain a thing,
And quickly spanned,
Is April-love's estate."

The vision fades, and hark
Again! a chime
Of joy sublime
Thrills through the dark
A message clear:—
"Why stand'st thou doubting here?
Hope with the new-born year.
If thou hast loved and lost,
Thine is the promise sure;
Live in the thought secure:
Be strong, nor fear.
Night waneth fast;
The chiding voices cease.

"Look forward. Life for thee
Hath purpose yet.
From vain regret,
O dreamer, flee!

The trumpets sound
A challenge. While the blood
Runs hot, and life is good,
Answer, nor count the cost;
All for thy manhood dare;
So, with the laurel fair
Thou shalt be crowned,
When Death, at last,
Foldeth thy soul in peace."

ENVOI.

THROUGH all these written pages,
In all my verse's chime,
O'er all the changing stages
Of sad, and happy time;

To sound of music gliding,
Intangible, unseen,
On wings of Fancy riding,
Thou movest, dear my Queen.

The seasons bring their changes,
The falling leaf and sere;
And far the swallow ranges
Ere spring again be here.

Thy beauty, too, is mortal;
The gold must fade to gray;
And here, within Life's portal,
Thou hast but little stay:

Yet in my heart for ever,
Still shalt thou reign supreme;
Nor Death himself shall sever
The glory of my dream.

MOODS AND MEASURES.

THE DANCE OF THE FAIRIES.

THIS is the wood of the fays:
Tread lightly.
Happy the man who may gaze
On the circle haunted,
By the spell of the green fairy ring
Enchanted,
Where nightly
Revel and sing
The elves that alone by the eyes
Of mortals are sighted
When the sunset dies,
And the glow-worm torches
Are lighted.
Then, through the dim porches
Of forestry drooping,
The wee folk come trooping.
Hark! hark! to their song
The long grasses among,
As the owl from his perch flees affrighted.

Drum-a-drum, drum-a-drum,
Softly their footsteps hum,
Laughing and whooping
Merrily, airily
Skipping, and stooping
In pick-a-back races.
Ding-a-ding, ding-a-ding!
Madly the bluebells swing.
Ding-a-dong, ding-a-dong!
Closer they press and throng
Into their places;
Over the mosses deep,
Where the dark shadows creep,
There they are dancing—
Retreating, advancing,
Mopping, and mowing,
Scraping, and bowing;
Till, over lawn and mere,
Sudden loud Chanticleer
Wakes with his chiding.
Then, sunbeams astriding,
Mounting, and riding,
Hurrying, scurrying,
All disappear!

ON A LITTLE TURQUOISE FROG.

I WAS born in Italy,
Underneath an azure sky,
In my eyes, behold! there shine
Garnets from a Tuscan mine.

Once a froglet in a marsh,
With my brothers croaking harsh,
"Brekekekex koax!" I
Chanted when the moon was high.

Now, at last, transformed to stone,
Silent is my monotone;
But, though fast in prison pent,
Yet can I be eloquent,

Singing songs unsung to you
Of dreaming lakes, and skies of blue;
Cypress trees of velvet green,
Through the slanting olives seen;

Hills of purple Apennine
Fringed with summer-scented pine;
Rushing streams, and poplars prim
Marshalled at the river's brim;

Crumbling towers, and vine-clad walls ;
Rainbow-shafted waterfalls
Sounding through the orchards deep,
Where the flocks at noontide sleep :

Golden dreams like these I bring ;
Songs of olden lands I sing.
Therefore wear me while you can ;
I will be your talisman.

TO LAURENCE AND ANGELINE.

MES deux étoiles—you smiling stars
That light the little firmament
Of this provincial town, which bars
And keeps you in seclusion pent,
I wonder what your lives will be
When Fate and Fortune set you free.

My Laurence, with the roguish eyes,
And curls done à la Japonaise,
You little guess what danger lies
In your unconscious pretty ways,
And how of old such graces brought
Men's hearts to strife, and ruin wrought.

And you, my dainty Angeline,
More serious, more timid, yet
Not too intent on things divine
Sometimes to play the gay coquette,
Who knows but your enchantments might
Have caused fanatic fires to light?

So, wisely to avoid such ruth,
Fate keeps you safely under latch;
And Laurence, in the pearl of youth,
No doubt will make a prudent match;
While Angeline, lest I mistake,
Will other vows than nunhood's make.

IN CORSICA.

AS by the waterfall sit I
This golden afternoon,
My fancy, like a butterfly,
Flits idly to the tune
Of rippling streams, and dallies
In chestnut-shaded alleys.

Of lentisk, arbutus, and heath
My banquet hall is made;
Sweet scented with wild strawberry's breath,
My smooth green table laid;
As though the elves had grown
Their fruits for me alone.

Peace mirrored in a summer dream!
How far away the toils
Of worldly faring cities seem!
How trivial the spoils
Hard-won in weary strife,
Beside this happy life!

SUNRISE IN THE VAL D'ANNIVIERS.

SUNRISE, and soft in the firs
The awaking delight
Of the dawn. Dim shadowy spurs
That spectre-like show
In their mantles of snow.
And, sudden, a gleam o'er the hills
That pierces and thrills
The deep-bosomed vale in its flight.

And lo! where the Moon disarrayed
O'er the mountain-side dips,
As the faint stars tremble and fade,
And the generous fire
Strikes homestead and byre,
The mist-covered meadows appear
A diaphanous mere,
Navied with silvery ships.

THE WINDING WAY.

To where beyond these voices there is peace.

THE road winds upward through the pines
To heights of white eternal snow,
Where Dawn's ethereal breath refines
The lower mists to clouds which glow

With living fire immaculate
As when, of old, the first glad rays
Sped at the Word from Heaven's gate
To light the world's untrodden ways.

And as, far down, with steadfast eyes,
Toward the glittering peaks I hold,
Great thoughts within my heart arise,
Beyond the art of words to mould.

For, with their elemental might,
The mountains of this silent land
Inspire my soul with clearer sight
To recognise and understand

The deeper mysteries that bind
Ourselves in chains about God's feet;
The purpose of the Master-Mind,
In all its wonder made complete.

And, thus borne up from meaner strife,
Through highest realms I seem to move
To that sweet peace which folds our life
With arms of universal love.

LOVE AND FAITH.

A PRIEST came out at eventide
Into the fields by the river-bed.
"Ave Maria!"—his beads he plied,
And a calm was over his spirit shed;
But the wind blew cold from snows above,
And he knew that his joy was a loveless love.

A philosopher sat by the midnight oil
Building a creed for the life of man;
But all that he won from the hours of toil
Was this: "Since ever the world began
We fight for peace through storm and stress,
And nothing is good but nothingness.

"And what avails when all be done?
Bitter 's the taste of the Knowledge-Tree.
Naught matters: we work, or we play—'tis one;
For the end is the end of eternity."
And the sun rose over the hills, and the air
Echoed a cry of dark despair.

And the lamp burnt low, while the sunshine swept
The forest aisles in long cascades,
And the song of the waking blackbirds leapt
In pæans loud through the emerald glades ;
But never a breath of hope it brought
To the man who the creed of happiness wrought.

A poet sat in the dewy morn,
Listening rapt to the matins prayer
Of the bird, and the sweet fresh breezes borne
On the wings of the dawn to his window there ;
And, even as they chanted, well he knew
That the world was good, and the truth was true.

For the face of a maid had smiled on him,
A smile as fair as the morning star,
Whose eyes with the mist of love were dim ;
And her voice, like the lark at heaven's bar,
Had poured in his ears a magic strain
That woke the God in his soul again.

THE NEW ARGONAUTS.

WE are launching on the great emprise to-day,
In brave array ;
Heave the anchor, Brothers, heave ! and, come what may
In the fray,
Our endeavour ne'er shall cease
Till, like sons of ancient Greece,
The ideal golden fleece
We bear away.

Our ship is christened Faith, and her crew
Pledged anew
To deeds that only gods, and heroes true,
Dared to do,
When the Argonauts of yore
To the land of wonders bore,
And, upon the Phasian shore,
The dragon slew.

For the kingdoms of Romance, and Fairy-tale,
We set sail ;
And, clad in Hope's impenetrable mail,
Down the trail

Of the Hydra-headed Snake,
That ever is awake,
Our dauntless pennons shake
To the gale.

Right eagerly she starts to seek the prize,
Though the wise
May shake their heads as merrily she flies,
And the cries
Of her cheering sailors sound
O'er the waves, and, myrtle crowned,
Her mast-heads leap and bound
To the skies.

Upon the surging billows in our pride
We will ride,
Little heeding that for ever men have tried,
Far and wide,
The same sweet goal to reach,
But to perish on the beach,
Where the wrecks of ages bleach
Mortified.

And what though Fate has cast our horoscope,
And we grope
In vain to find the Truth, while we cope,
Oar and rope,

With a quest that brings to naught,
As Philosophy has taught,
Still, our hearts shall e'er be fraught
With living Hope.

The world has stood for centuries the same
Ere we came ;
We know it, and to those of old be blame ;
Nor shall fame
And honour e'er belong
To slaves who bear the thong
Of Tyranny and Wrong
Without shame.

Then onward, Hearts ! For us the hour is young,
And among
Our Brotherhood let gallant songs be sung
By every tongue.
Across the harbour bar
Push out, and steer afar,
While beacon-bright our star
In heaven is hung !

SANCTUARY.

WITHIN this aisle
Of whispering beeches,
Where bluebells smile,
And the blackbird preaches
The gospel of Spring
To ears that will listen;
Where, sweet thoughts on the wing,
The white butterflies glisten:
Here is heart's balm,
And solitude;
A haven calm
From passions rude.

BROKEN MELODIES.

O SILVER lute,
What mournful mood
Hath so subdued,
And left thee mute ?

Behold ! with garlands of delight
Young April dight.
Alone hast thou no song to make
For dear Love's sake ?

Why silent now,
Who, in the happier days of old,
Didst charmèd hold
The babbling brook,
And in the trees
Enchant the breeze ;
Then sudden shook
Upon the air an ecstasy
Of joy so high
That, when the spell

Resolved, and fleet,
With wingèd feet,
O'er down and dell,
The West Wind on his message flew,
And, whispering through
His banks again, the River streamed,
Thy music seemed
One with the voices of the air that sing
The psalm of Spring?

QUOUSQUE TANDEM.

O WIND of Fate, that drives us far
Across the wave, with sails unfurled,
Toward the sands where shattered are
The hopes of all the world.

Who knows for what fair goal inspired
My soul set out upon its course,
With what divine ambition fired
My life swept from its source?

Who knows? But in the darkening scene,
With eyes turned backward o'er the ways,
I only see the might-have-been
Fade with the sunset's rays.

ONWARD.

DID I for a moment falter
In my whole belief?
Did I think, as seasons alter,
And the spring is brief,
Love would with the swallows range,
Or, as roses, fade and change?

Did I, in my great endeavour,
Yearn awhile for rest?
Turned I from my purpose ever,
Taking, for the best,
Joys that fleeting are, and pass
As morning dews upon the grass?

Did I, in the hour of doing,
Turn my steps aside?
Did I, in the swift pursuing,
With the laggards ride,
Seeking, from the storm and stress,
Vain inglorious idleness?

Yea! our hearts grow faint and sicken
When the squadrons reel,
When, to weary ranks and stricken,
Faint the trumpets peal,
And the gathering shadows fold
Earth in night's embraces cold.

Yet serene, from heaven's dark curtain,
Shines the star of Hope.
Brothers, close the ranks uncertain,
With the battle cope;
Labour onward, strive, endure:
Courage, for the end is sure.

IN THE SHADOWS.

DO you never, in the gloaming,
Ere the friendly lights are lit,
When gray thoughts, as birds, are homing,
And the shadows bat-like flit;
Do you never, silent musing,
For the old time sigh and yearn,
And the days beyond all losing,
Days that never shall return?

Do you never, as you ponder,
To youth's happy innocence
Give a wistful thought of wonder
And solicitude intense?
Do regrets for love uncherished
Never move the heart to tears,
Nor ambitions that are perished
Mock the fruitless after-years?

Do you never, when the darkness
Falls upon the winter scene,
And, in all their dreary starkness,
Trees, that once were fresh and green,

Show like spectres, lean and meagre,
Think that like to them shall we,
Who were once so proud and eager,
Shorn of all our glory be?

Happy he who finds no sadness
In the whispering after-thought,
In whose heart the years with gladness
And white memories are fraught;
Since the burden heaviest holden
Is the curse of days misspent,
And the breaking of the golden
Talisman of sweet content.

A SPRING DAY AT FRESHWATER.

BATHED in the amber glow
Of an April day,
The headland shimmers white,
A panoply
Of silver bright:
Above the cloudless sky,
And a frill of foam below,
Shredded in spray;

Eastward a little bay,
Curving an arm
Of delicate shining sand
To the kiss of the waves;
And, dark in land,
The sounding mermaid caves,
Where fairy echoes stray,
The heart to charm.

Here, on the grassy dome
Of the cliff, the bees
Loot treasure of gold
From the glittering whin,
And the martins hold
Long parliament, and begin
Once more the labour of home
In their fastnesses.

And from the distant beach,
Borne on the breeze,
The voices of children, sweet
As the birds of spring,
Rise up to greet
Me, with the murmuring
And soft inarticulate speech
Of the wind and the seas.

Blithe as the linnet's lay,
In the blackthorn hedge
Curtained with lace,
Is their laughter light;
Not merrier race
The screaming gulls of the Wight,
Than the water-babies at play
By the ocean's edge.

Now, loosed from her moorings, high
Beyond the pale
Of storm-tossed weed, with a peal
Of shouting, and strain
Of grating keel,
The first boat takes the main,
And, leaping to liberty,
Shakes out her sail.

And I muse on the spacious time
When our fathers gazed
A long farewell to the land
That they loved, and made
For the unknown strand,
Nor the great adventure stayed
Till, a beacon from clime to clime,
Their ensigns blazed.

While splendid visions float
On the inward eye;
A great armada of ships
The horizon sweeps,
And from the lips
Of a thousand cannon, leaps
The jubilant battle-note
Of victory.

Nay, 'tis but the noontide gun
From the seaward fort,
Where the old flag greeting waves
To the homeward borne,
And to the heart that braves
The trackless paths forlorn,
Far 'neath the setting sun,
Where glory 's bought.

Wide strewn in their ocean graves
The white bones lie;
Hurricane surge, and blast,
The hearts of oak
To the rocks have cast;
But never their anger broke
The spirit that o'er the waves
Won admiralty!

And we, born heirs to the trust
In this later age,
Ours it is to share
The proud emprise,
Ours to dare
All for our liberties,
So that we be not thrust
From the heritage.

And ever the wild seas cry:
"Who, fearless, free,
Win by our might to the crown
Of destiny,
To them renown
Shall be given, and the honour high
Of a name that shall not die
For all time to be."

SONNETS.

UBIQUE.

O LOVE, my Love, I see thee everywhere
In waking hours; and in the time of sleep,
When, from the gates of pearl, dim visions creep,
Thou movest like a spirit white and fair:
Floats o'er the moon a cloud, it is thy hair
Drawn golden-gleaming through the azure deep;
And stars that from the summer heaven peep
Are but thine eyes gazing upon me there.
Yea, every scent and sound that fills the night
Whispers of thee. The lilies' balmy sigh
Exhales thy being on the ravished air;
And the soft murmur of the breezes light
Among the poplar trees is but a rare
Faint echo of thy voice's melody.

TO MY ABSENT LOVE.

SWEET exile from my side, my absent Love,
Whose eyes beam on me through the distance, clear
As lights of the celestial hemisphere
That gleam and gaze upon me from above;
Would that I were a star, that I might reve
Across the spangled firmament, and peer
Far, far beyond this dark horizon here,
And with the ordered constellations move,
Until, drawn upwards in the dome of night,
Myself should reach the zenith o'er thy head,
And, gliding downward then in viewless flight,
Within the temple of thy dreams impart
Such visions as beatify the heart
When souls immortal each to each are wed.

CYNTHIA SINGING.

SWEET is the sound of water falling through
Deep mountain clefts to mossy pools ; and sweet
The gracious lullaby the winds repeat
To dreaming flowers ; sweet are the birds that strew
The woods with harmony, waking anew
Echoes of song that make the hours to fleet
In Arcady with golden numbers, meet
For careless sunshine, and a heaven of blue.
Yet, in the April morning have I heard,
Floating across the fresh enamelled meads,
A clearer song than water, wind, or bird,
Or long-drawn melody of whispering reeds—
My Cynthia's voice, than which the days of old,
And days that are, no sweeter music hold.

PANSIES.

A DROWSY garden steeped in moonbeams white ;
A stream of magic perfume from the still
Of sleeping roses, and the fitful thrill
Of breezes, through the soft Italian night
Whispering of Youth, and Summer's brief delight :
There we together met. By what strange will
Of Time or Circumstance, of Good or Ill,
What matter ? since awhile, in Fate's despite,
Hope's golden chalice to our lips was borne,
Stained with no bitter after-taste of gall.
And when for ever you were gone, and all
The garden weeping tears of crystal dew,
I garlanded, true flowers of those who mourn,
Blue pansies, sweet with memories of you.

MY TRUE MISTRESS.

APRIL, thy name is music to my ear,
The whispered phrase of vagrant honey-bees,
The melody of winds in budding trees,
The echo of the hills, when far and near
The cuckoo calls, and all the skies are clear;
When daffodils dance lightly o'er the leas,
And in the meads the white anemones,
The virgins of Spring's palace royal, appear.
Whether I greet thee in this northern land,
Crowned with the pearl and emerald of the thorn,
Or whether, waiting by the southern strand,
I feel thy breath upon my spirit borne
O'er azure seas, where gold-girt islands dream,
Thou art my Mistress, and my joy supreme.

IN THE TEMPLE.

SO long the clouds have brooded o'er the land ;
So long the dusty turmoil of the World
My heart upon a weary road has whirled.
But, now, behold ! by gentle breezes fanned,
The mists dissolve ; with festal garlands spanned,
The woodland ways are green ; and, wide unfurled,
The banners of sweet Spring, with dewdrops pearled,
A willing worship of the heart demand.
The music of the happy birds shall be
My anthem, introit, and volunt'ry ;
With gleaming wreaths of iris shall be set
My altar ; while the white-stoled violet
And crimson hawthorn thuribles shall swing
To purify my grateful offering.

TO HERRICK.

For well thou know'st 'tis not the extent
Of land makes life, but sweet content.

I.

O, SWEETLY sounds the music o'er the meads
And "pebbly streams" of our dear Devonshire,
The joyous song of him who, to the lyre
Of merrie England, tuned the dulcet reeds
Of ancient Greece, and now with Jonson leads,
Through fairer fields of asphodel, the quire
On whom the Muses shed their sacred fire.
The world, grown sorrowful, no longer heeds
The heart's immortal strains. The life and grace,
That in your lyrics found an honoured place,
No longer please. But o'er the troubled land
Unrest and Discontent go hand in hand:
So that I count you, too, in this most blessed,
No weight of new-world doubt your soul oppressed.

THE SAME.

II.

MASTER, whose minstrelsy expresseth clear,
In numbers musical, the lesson plain
Of April blossoms, and of garnered grain,
How often in the winter of the year,
Far from the "lyric festivals" so dear
To thy convivial mood and generous brain,
The well-remembered joy of youth would pain
Thy solitude, and, on thine inward ear,
Echoes of nights ambrosial resound—
Rare nights when, as the inspiring bowl went round,
Ben Jonson, crowned with sacred laurel, sang,
And to the roof the mirth of Shakespeare rang:
Yet, hadst thou not renounced these pleasures high,
Mute were the sweetest bird of Arcady.

THE SAME.

III.

THE breath of Spring upon the waiting earth;
The primrose pale, with tearful eyes; the fate
Of gathered rosebuds left disconsolate,
And fading daffodils; the rustic mirth
Of sunburnt carnivals; the simple worth
And kindly hearts of men of low estate;
Love's dear content, his virtues rare and great:
To praise of these thy happy Muse gave birth.
No themes magnificent thy verse inspire;
But the wild hawthorn decked about thy lyre
Scattereth the perfume of Arcadian days,
The glad delight of England in her pride,
When, sweet as birds that greet the Easter-tide,
Her lovers carolled down the flowery ways.

IN PRAISE OF ISIS.

FAR have I wandered, by the sounding falls
And cataracts of Scandinavia wild ;
Oft have I heard, beneath the moonlight mild
Of blue Italian nights, the madrigals
Of dulcet-throated water borne from walls
Curtained with arbutus and broom, and piled
With odorous myrtles ; and long hours beguiled
Where Rhine moves regal through his mountain halls.
Yet, deeper joy, dear Isis, have I known
When on thy tranquil breast I dreamed alone ;
For thou, the tried companion of my spring,
With all fond memories of boyhood fraught,
My heart the joy of life, my lips to sing
The song of happiness, hast ever taught.

SPIRIT OF HELLAS.

SPIRIT of Hellas, breathe into my ears
The spell that, in the golden days gone by,
Woke on Parnassus such sweet minstrelsy
As shames the dearth of these inglorious years,
The spell that stirred the depth of human tears,
And touched the chords of all emotions high
Upon the lyres of that fraternity
Whose music echoes ever to the spheres.
For, as I mused awhile upon the place
Where time-worn frieze and pediment forlorn
Mark the memorials of the wondrous race
That bloomed and faded in the world's first morn,
Methought a voice cried: "They alone shall live
To whom the gods the crown of laurel give."

LE CŒUR LÉGER.

THE sky is clear to-day. The Western Wind
Lifts up his voice among the swaying trees.
Like fallen stars, the pale anemones
Spangle the meadows; in the linden rind
The sweet sap rises; while the children bind
Fresh scented garlands, on their knees
Among the cowslips, where the merchant bees
Pervade the air with voices human kind.
The banks, the grassland, and the gentle slope
Of silver birch with fairer promise teem;
And where the rose-pink budded apples gleam,
Spring calls to Love, and Love awakes to hope;
While I, my heart by April joyous made,
Step lightly through the cheerful masquerade.

HYÈRES.

ISLANDS of gold—high battlements of light,
Dreaming on sapphire seas, amid a haze
Diaphanous. Beneath my feet a maze
Of gemmed mosaic, where the cistus white
Showers the earth with limpid chrysolite;
Hedges of rosemary, and upland ways
Thick-set with lavender; warm rocks ablaze
With red valerian; and, flashing bright
Among the black-branched ilex, butterflies
Sulphur and scarlet-robed, by poets named
"The Glory of Provence." With such fair dreams
I charm the solitude that darkest seems
Here in our England when, 'neath sullen skies,
Spring on the threshold lingers all ashamed.

EARLY SPRING.

IT is the time 'twixt pear and apple bloom,
When from the leafing blackthorn disappears
Her crown of snows, and all the woodland wears
A brighter green among the sombre gloom
Of ancient yews; when over hill and coomb
The sparkling gorses flare, and starlike peers
The blue-eyed periwinkle 'mid the spears
Of martial orchids; when the swallows loom
And glance, chasing with elfin scream the flies
That dance above the river, while the bees
Drone to the love-sick hyacinths, until
The setting sun smiles to the fair young trees
A soft good-night, and whispering breezes fill
The April dusk with fitful lullabies.

EXCELSIOR.

SWEETHEART, when summer time again is here,
Beneath the shadowy alpine heights we 'll go,
By gleaming pine-woods, where the breezes blow
Light through the scented palaces, and where
Upon the argent bosom of the mere
The solemn mountains dream ; or to the snow,
Through gardens gay, where azure gentians glow,
We 'll climb together to a nobler sphere,
Forgetful of the world, as angels borne
Upward to meet the messengers of morn,
Beyond the forest, where in glittering pride
The sunbeam squadrons on cloud chargers ride,
And round their chosen king, with voiceless song,
The lesser peaks in adoration throng.

FULL SUMMER.

THE damask mantle of the Summer weighs
Full-folded on the shoulders of the beech,
And to the grass the ripening hazels reach
Long arms of fresh luxuriance: a maze
The green-arched woodland is, where sunlight plays
Through leafy lattices, and zephyrs preach
To flower and butterfly, with fairy speech,
The joy of love made one with golden days.
Ah! that my soul, like some wild-bird that flies
Free to the bosom of the forest, might
Learn the sweet secret that close hidden lies,
The talisman of love, and life's delight;
For, sooth on ears that may not understand
Falls the evangel of this happy land.

FRUSTRA.

O STRANGE! that when the summer skies are fair,
And all the earth a garden full of scent;
When, with the guelder-roses' snowflakes blent,
The lilac drifts upon the dreaming air;
When with the long-drawn days our souls might share
Some spirit of the Earth's new merriment:
Strange! that on things of trivial moment bent,
Ourselves, our hearts, to sordid joys repair;
So that, whenever Spring revives anew,
And stirs to life most beautiful the flowers,
Spreads o'er the woods her emerald canopies,
And with the light of love her pageant dowers,
Blind from the golden truth we turn our eyes,
And, on a barren quest, the dross pursue.

BLUE AND GOLD.

SWEETHEART, the hyacinths of fairy blue
Have spread their scented carpet through the wood;
The speedwell by the road has doffed her hood,
And shyly lifts her azure eyes to woo
The wandering butterfly; where violets flew
Anon their bannerets, and may-buds stood
In glittering regiments, the golden snood
Of virgin iris takes the morning dew;
And all the world is as a palace fair,
Filled with the music of exultant birds.
The spirit of the Earth breathes everywhere
Faint melodies linked sweet with magic words
Unspoken, yet, to Love's enchanted ear,
Fraught with a meaning dominant and clear.

MY LADY OF THE VIOLIN.

SWEET are the wandering voices of the waves
Upon the sands, beneath the summer sky;
And sweet the western breeze's anthem high
Among the solemn forest architraves;
And sweet the whisper of the stream that laves
The reed-fringed meadow banks of Arcady,
Where I have watched the rosy Hours fly,
And Night loom dusky from her amber caves.
But when toward her passionate wild strings
My Lady leans with lightly flashing bow,
A sweeter music on my senses rings,
And into wider spheres of rapture flow
My ravished thoughts, until it seems that I
Touch the white gates of immortality.

SLEEPLESSNESS.

BLUE is the summer night. The pale witch Moon
Leans from her lofty chariot, and dowers
The sea with peace; and where the white cliff towers,
A fitful lullaby the waters croon.
But to my wakeful senses come amain
Fond memories of youth, and happier hours
When Love was kind, and fairer than the flowers
The face of her who brought my soul to pain.
O thou who gildest with illusion brief
The sorrow of the waves, bestow thy boon
On my poor heart, and shed thy gracious balm
Upon the troubled ocean of my grief,
That in the haven of sweet dreams I swoon,
And steep my soul in slumber's perfect calm.

SUNSET.

THE trees show bare against the flaming skies,
Save where the surging cedars darkly loom;
Through all the garden creeps the winter gloom,
And, rose by rose, the fire of sunset dies.
Blank are the windows, sightless as Death's eyes,
Browed with October's funeral ivy bloom;
Silent, forsaken is each well-known room;
Sadly the wind among the chimneys sighs.
Hushed are the voices that made glad of old
These fearful alleys. Broken, empty now
The bowers of eglantine, whose arms enfold
No more the well-loved forms: and empty thou,
My heart, as, lonely watching here, I yearn
For the dead hours that never shall return.

o

FORGOTTEN POETS.

THERE are a thousand voices in the air;
A thousand scents the summer night beguile;
With beauty manifold the woodlands smile;
The wide blue continent of heaven, how fair!
Yet there have been a thousand days as rare,
And songs of earth and ocean sweet as these
Which wake the living music of the trees,
And seem to conscious ears beyond compare.
So is it with remembered greatness. Some
There are whose music haunts each passing wind,
And, one with the wild rapture of the sea,
Through all the tides of time shall ne'er be dumb.
But think how many, sweet as they may-be,
Have sung, and left no single note behind.

IN LONDON.

AH me! that I for ever in the maze
Of this vast city walk the unbending round,
The never-varying circle, tied and bound
By custom's law, and, down these weary ways,
On one same gray horizon fix my gaze—
Bleak destiny of exile, sorrow-crowned,
Hating the base, yet to the unceasing sound
Of strife unutterable to pass my days.
Once on a time I sought a fairer goal:
The wide sky opened to the morning sun
Her rosy breast; aloft the skylark cried;
And, with the air and singing bird made one,
Above all meaner passions held, my soul
By Heaven's ethereal breath was sanctified.

SURGIT AMARI ALIQUID.

O SADNESS past all sadness, when the cloud
Sweeps in upon the tender April day,
Leaving the skies disconsolate and gray,
Where smiled the sun a lover's greeting proud:
And sad it is to see the first rose bowed
Before the cruel tempest, and the may
Scattered and torn, that gleamed in fresh array,
With all the grace of maidenhood endowed.
Yet sadder far when, down youth's flowery way,
Misfortune moves with outstretched hands, and pale,
To touch, transform, and mould to grief and pain
The sweet young life. Ah! what shall then avail
The bitterness of tears? What art essay
To give the roses back their prime again?

THE CHRISTMAS CHILD.

LOUD through the night the Herald Angels sing
In joyful chorus, to the listening earth
Lifting sweet anthems, and with solemn mirth
Inspiring us with thankfulness to bring
A humble tribute to the Saviour King.
Now in the manger, lowly in His birth,
Enwrapped in swaddling clothes of meanest worth,
The Holy Child is softly slumbering.
Enter we then with awe, and, while we gaze
Noiseless upon the Babe, in deep amaze,
New hope of better things our hearts shall fill,
And courage fresh to our endeavours come,
Nobly to fight the fight of faith, until
The Father calls again His children home.

PARTING.

'TIS autumn now, and thou and I are far.
But still, methinks, the winding path is green
Upon the hill, where many a time between
The branches, like a sudden-gleaming star,
I, in the happier hours that naught can mar
In memory's treasure-house, have watchful seen
Thy dear-loved form toward me move, serene,
Across the night's dark intervening bar.
The leaves upon our trysting-place will fall,
The swallows turn toward the kinder seas,
And all in vain the wistful winds shall call
Thy name among the weeping, listening trees.
But thou, alas! with summer time art gone,
And I must climb the silent hill alone.

THE OLD, OLD LOVE.

O LOVE of old, where art thou passed away?
In what dim bourne beyond the reach of years,
Across what ocean bitterness of tears,
Findest thou haven, and in what sad gray
Elysian meadows doth thy spirit stray?
Knowest thou not that now the violet peers,
The willows burgeon by the babbling weirs,
And larks sing sweetly through the April day,
As when we two together whispering went
Beside the full-brimmed river, and the world
Seemed but to live for us; when spring-time blent
For us its odours rare, and all unfurled
The glory of the cloudless heaven shone
Upon our love, and gave us benison?

HEARTSEASE.

SOMETIMES in summer, when the drowsy trees
Whisper together, and the West Wind makes
Soft lullaby among the forest brakes;
Above their rhapsody of song, more sweet than bees,
Or wandering birds' inconstant melodies,
I hear a voice that with its music takes
My spirit prisoner, and calms the aches
Of old-remembered loss, and gives me ease.
And, as a suppliant rapt before a shrine
Feels in his inward soul at last the flow
Of long desire made perfect, so I know
That still the memory of thy love is mine,
Nor all in vain, and lonely, have I striven,
Since thus thy spirit-self to me is given.

BEAULIEU.

I WATCH beside the tideless glittering sea,
Silent and scentless, alien to the eye
From those cold northern waters, lifting high
Their clarions harsh, that last, to you and me,
Sounded farewell of England. Flower and tree,
Beneath the lowering of your distant sky,
Flutter, and pale to death; the swallows fly;
The roses bow to Winter's stern decree.
Yet were it nothing that nor rain nor storm
Breaks the enchantment of these southern days,
Did not some part of your sweet self inform
With beauty, secret to myself, the ways,
And over all a magic influence cast,
Where in the time of old your footsteps passed.

THE LAST SUNSET.

I WATCHED the weary Sun descend his throne
Towards the glimmering portals of the West,
And, ere the pageant faded, o'er the crest
Of darkling forest-land a voice was blown—
The wandering echo of a spirit lone—
"I pass, and with me to the eternal rest
Pass all the broken hopes that once possessed
The souls of men." And, as it ceased its moan,
Behold! with faltering steps, and shoulders bent,
'Neath the red canopy of winter skies,
The Old Year went, and pale within his eyes
Gleamed the last long-expiring flame of those
Fierce fires that burned when in his might he rose
And like a giant strode the firmament.

SO SOON.

SO it is thus: after a little year
The voice of Love thrills faint, its echoes die,
Even its joys are but a memory,
And Hope sits leaden-eyed without a tear.
We who were tricked by Chance—how poor appear
Our fondest aspirations, sere and dry
As last year's leaves; and all in vain we try
To lure to life again the phantom drear
Of that forgotten ecstasy which seemed
The full perfection of imagining.
I know not why the golden dream we dreamed
Is past and faded. Roses still are red,
And nightingales among the willows sing.
Only the magic of Love's hour is fled.

CONSOLATION.

THOUGH I should never see your face again;
Though lost our love, and gone beyond recall,
And I left lonely here to dream of all
That might have been; still may I salve my pain:
For, as the seed which long asleep has lain
Spell-bound beneath the winter's freezing pall,
Warmed by the breath of spring, resolves the thrall,
So in my heart wakes memory's golden grain.
Ever alone, yet am I not alone,
For, absent, you possess my solitude;
The darkest day with hopes of you is light;
Your dear-remembered smiles disperse in flight
The melancholy hours; the haunting tone
Of your sweet music hallows my saddest mood.

LUX TENEBRIS.

December, 1899.

GOD gave our England might, and, by His Will,
Of the inviolate sea dominion high;
And, with the first great gift of liberty,
He bade her as His instrument fulfil,
Through cloud and storm, her destiny, until
In every land, where'er oppression be,
Her sword should set His chosen people free.
But, as for us of old, on Calvary's hill,
Through shame and bitterness of tears He passed
To make the One and Perfect Sacrifice,
We, too, must uncomplaining pay the price,
Obedient to His manifold behest,
Giving at need our dearest and our best,
So that we win to Honour at the last.

REALISATION.

HOW far our fond anticipations pass
The great event! How everything we seek
Is but a shadow which our senses weak
Have clothed with glory in Hope's magic glass!
And how, like desert mirages of grass
That of sweet comfort to the wayworn speak,
Our realised desires prove false and bleak;
The gold, at length possessed, a thing of brass!
Yet I have felt a joy within me thrill,
And rapture past all understanding fill
My heart, what time the rosy-girdled Sun
Shares with the Moon his throne, and soft the breeze
Whispers Love's message to the primroses;
For then I know 'tis spring, and winter 's done.

FINIS.

THE last verse must be fashioned,
The last prayer must be said,
The last faint chord impassioned
Upon the air be sped.

O, pray that in the making,
O, pray that in the song,
Howe'er the heart be aching,
How great so e'er the wrong,

There be no thought remaining
Of bitterness and tears,
The golden record staining
Of dear remembered years.

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